

Hafa Adai!

Women's Work Wear Drive draws broad support. **PAGE 8**

2 SIS seniors awarded full scholarships via QuestBridge. **PAGE 9**



\$1

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CUC gets good audit report, but...

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For the year ending Sept. 30, 2021, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. incurred a loss from operations of about \$14.7 million, in contrast to the \$426,460 income it posted the previous year, according to an independent audit on CUC released by the Office of the Public Auditor yesterday.

» **CUC incurred \$14.7M operations loss in 2021 compared to \$426,460 income in 2020**

Based on numbers cited in the report prepared by independent auditor Burger
See CUC on Page 4

Lawyers' motion to withdraw as IPI counsels OK'd

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission board has granted the motion of a law firm to withdraw as counsel for Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC in

CCC's five complaints against IPI. CCC board vice chair Rafael S. Demapan said that Kevin T. Abikoff, Daniel H. Weiner, and Samuel W. Salyer are discharged as counsel for IPI.
See IPI on Page 4



Demapan

Paseo to be paved this month

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Paseo de Marianas during the construction phase of the Garampan Revitalization Project.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Paseo de Marianas, which has been undergoing renovation work for over

a year now, will finally be paved this month, with renewed hope that this will revitalize what was once the CNMI's tourist district.

See PASEO on Page 4



New accord governs working inmates



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

CNMI Corrections Commissioner Anthony Torres holds up one of the new uniforms working inmates are required to wear while out in public. The implementation of new uniforms is pursuant to a memorandum of agreement between DOC, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Corrections, Department of Public

Safety, and the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services have signed a memorandum of agreement
See INMATES on Page 4

INSIDE



LOCAL

Christmas in the Marianas returns with all its holiday cheer tomorrow, Dec. 9, at T Galleria.

PAGE 2



SCIENCE & TECH

Penguin parents sleep for just seconds at a time in order to guard their newborn chicks.

PAGE 17



LIFE & STYLE

The Taylor Swift era is not over yet. Time magazine has named her its person of the year.

PAGE 18



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

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A large audience is seated in a hall, facing a stage where a group of performers in traditional Mariana attire are performing. A large screen in the background displays the text "Hafa Adai & Tirow Welcome to The Marianas Experience".

MVA

Christmas in the Marianas set to return on Sat., Dec. 9

"Wow, talk about being excited for Christmas. The energy of students last Saturday was through the roof at T Gal-

Participating schools are William S. Reyes Elementary School, Hopwood Middle School, Grace Christian Academy, Golden Harvest International School, Chacha Ocean View Middle School, Green Meadow School, Tana-pag Middle School, Saipan International School, Garapan Elementary School, Dandan Middle School, Northern Marianas International School, Agape Christian School, San Vicente Elementary School, Kagman Elementary School, Brilliant Star School, Mount Carmel School, Oleai Elementary School, Francisco M.

See CHRISTMAS on Page 3



MVA

Oleai Elementary School students perform at the 199th Annual Christmas in the Marianas kickoff on Dec. 2, 2023, at T Galleria in Garapan, Saipan.

'Twas the Month Before

Christmas

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CHRISTMAS

From page 2

Sablan Middle School, Saipan Southern High School, Marianas High School, Saipan Community School, and Kolblerville Elementary School.



A family enjoys a variety of drinks from Tupu Cane Juice at the 19th Annual Christmas in the Marianas kickoff on Dec. 2, 2023, at T Galleria in Garapan, Saipan.

Christmas tree contest prizes will be awarded on Dec. 16, 2023. Caroling & Skit contest will be awarded on Dec. 30, 2023.

This event is sponsored by Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, iShop, and Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods.

Other event supporters are the CNMI Public School System and Chamolinian Cultural Village Inc.

For more information, contact lead event coordinator and MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or 1.670.664.3200/1 or visit The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com. (MVA)

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IN APPEAL VS. ALLEGEDLY UNLAWFUL TERMINATION

Court dismisses ex-DOC officer's request for judicial review

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court as recently dismissed the petition filed by a former Department of Correction officer that asked the court to set aside a Civil Service Commission decision against the former corrections officer.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan dismissed last week former DOC officer Joseph N. Taisakan's petition for judicial

review of the CSC's ruling on his appeal alleging unlawful termination.

By doing so, Bogdan affirms the commission's decision finding Taisakan's termination to be lawful.

Taisakan was terminated for refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

According to Bogdan's order, former DOC commissioner Wally Villagomez's decision to terminate Taisakan was not unconstitutional or

otherwise unlawful, and the court declines to set it aside.

"What occurred here was not a violation of petitioner's constitutional rights. The petitioner was afforded ample opportunity to invoke and substantiate his request for a religious exemption and chose not to participate in the process, which he himself concedes was procedurally proper. His subsequent termination was not, therefore, based on his religious convictions or

even his request for a religious exemption itself, but rather on his failure to comply with the governor's directive, his violation of the employee code of conduct and code of ethics, and his insubordination," the judge said.

Bogdan said the CSC's decision that Taisakan's termination was not arbitrary, capricious, and abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law, was well-supported by the facts, well-re-

asoned, and grounded in law.

Taisakan was employed by the Department of Corrections from 2004 to 2022 as a Corrections Officer II.

On Feb. 18, 2021, former governor Ralph DLG Torres issued a directive that required Executive Branch employees to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus and provide proof of vaccination. The directive did allow a medical or religious exemption.

On Feb. 23, 2021, Corrections notified all its employees

that they had until March 12, 2021, to comply with the governor's directive.

On April 12, 2021, the CSC issued a bulletin notifying employees that the time period for compliance had been extended and that they had until April 30, 2021, to comply with the directive or risk the possibility of termination from employment.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

CUC

From page 1

Comer & Associates, it said that CUC's net operating revenues in 2021 was \$65.57 million, while its operating expenses were at \$83.26 million, which translates to a loss of \$14.68 million from operations.

The year before that, in 2020, net operating revenue was at \$82.06 million, while the operating expenses were at \$81.63 million, which meant \$426,460 in earnings.

Burger Comer & Associates gave CUC a good audit report for the year ending Sept. 30, 2021, but found significant deficiency for not complying with federal requirements in one of its major programs.

In its corrective action plan, CUC acting chief financial officer Rodolfo Urbano informed the auditor that a personnel has been assigned to monitor various projects and work with the grants administrator to ensure that reports are prepared and submitted on time.

David Burger of the Burger Comer & Associates submit-

ted to the CUC board their report on CUC's internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters based on an audit of financial statements.

The auditor audited CUC's financial statements, which comprise the statement of net position as of Sept. 30, 2021, and the related statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position, and of cash flows.

Burger said the results of their tests disclosed instance of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

In their opinion, Burger said, CUC complied in all material respects, with the types of compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of its other major federal programs.

Burger did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that they consider to be material weaknesses. However, he said, they did identify certain deficiencies in internal control that they consider to be a significant deficiency.

In their opinion, Burger

said, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

The auditor found the deficiency pertaining to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure: Consolidated Environmental Programs.

According to the administrative conditions of the grant agreement, CUC must prepare an SF 425 (Federal Financial Report) annually and submit it on or before Dec. 31 of the same year. Burger found that this report was submitted late. The auditor found that the grant administrator did not submit the report on time but requested an extension. Burger said no proof was provided that the extension was filed or approved by the grantor.

Burger said there is a risk that the grantor may not approve future grants due to CUC's noncompliance with the grant requirements.

The auditor recommends that CUC should properly maintain their accounting, financial, and project records

in a manner that will facilitate timely preparation and submission of required reports.

Urbano told Burger that CUC agrees with the auditor's finding and shared CUC's corrective action plan.

CUC acknowledged that fiscal year 2021 has been difficult both operationally and financially for CUC as it was coming off Super Typhoon Yutu—needing to clean up, repair, and reestablish systems that were damaged—and then sliding into the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely damaged revenue generation throughout the CNMI due to the loss of Saipan tourism, bringing about a dramatic turn in events.

CUC's cash flow each month plunged from \$9 million or more to \$5 million and less, which required commitments from all divisions that there would be no overtime, all cell phones provided by the utility were turned in and shifted to personal responsibility, staffing was prioritized when vacancies occurred, vacations were canceled, and maintenance was pulled back on critical repairs, among other austerity measures.

IPI

From page 1

The three are from Hughes Hubbard Reed LLP, a multinational law firm headquartered in New York City.

Demapan also granted Joey P. San Nicolas' motion to withdraw as counsel for IPI in the five enforcement actions.

CCC board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero said that Stephen J. Nutting and Michael Chen have been appointed to represent IPI.

DeLeon Guerrero said Chen and Michael McCollum are counsels for IPI in its appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

INMATES

From page 1

governing the supervision of inmates who are eligible to work with these departments as part of DOC's rehabilitation program.

According to DOC Commissioner Anthony Torres, he, DPS Commissioner Clement Bermudes, and DFEMS Commissioner Juan Pua signed last Dec. 1 the first MOU among the three departments regarding the supervision of working inmates.

"We've never had an MOU in the past and I knew it was something that needed to be done so that we have an understanding in place where expectations are set forth regarding proper supervision of inmates assigned to them," he said.

Torres said the purpose of this MOU is to establish clear protocols for supervision, management, and utilization of inmate workers within DOC, DPS, and DFEMS.

"This MOU was established to formalize the guidelines for the effective supervision of assigned inmate workers and their appropriate identification. This MOU describes the roles and responsibilities of all parties in achieving these goals and objectives. There's an expectation that officers are to supervise these inmates and, if they are caught doing anything, to hold them accountable and send them right back. In doing that, inmates assigned to DPS or DFEMS

The chairman said Office of the Attorney General's chief solicitor Jonathan Robert Glass Jr. is representing CCC in the U.S. Supreme Court.

IPI has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit decision reversing the U.S. District Court for the NMI's order compelling the CCC to subject to its complaints against IPI to arbitration.

The five complaints arose from IPI's alleged failure to pay the casino regulatory fee, annual casino license fee, and non-compliant with the required working capital for payroll.

will be wearing identifiers, essentially uniforms specific to the department," he said.

As part of the MOU, Torres said working inmates will be provided "identifiers" or uniforms that are color coded to a specific department.

A light blue shirt will be worn by inmates assigned to DPS, DFEMS inmate workers will wear orange, while green uniforms will be worn by inmates assigned to work at DOC or DOC outreach projects.

"These identifiers are placed so that the public knows that these inmates are not to be approached. In the past, inmates were allowed to wear civilian clothes and that is strictly prohibited moving forward," he said.

Torres explained that these identifiers will help both officers and civilians identify inmates out in public to ensure that they are not doing anything questionable.

Community members who see inmates doing anything questionable, even if it's just taking off their uniform or entering a store, are encouraged to call 911 to report this.

"If the public sees inmates outside in these identifiers doing questionable things, they should report it as soon as possible. The first step of rehabilitation is coupling it with accountability. We ask the community to help with accountability," he said.

Currently, 14-16 working inmates are assigned to DPS, 14-16 are assigned to DFEMS, and about 15 are assigned to DOC and its outreach projects.

PASEO

From page 1

In a statement from Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Gloria Cavanagh, she disclosed that the CNMI government expects the Paseo de Marianas to be paved in the next few weeks, after over a year of construction work.

"The government is planning to pave the Paseo de Marianas by mid-December. This also includes a parking lot on Beach Road. We are hoping this will also give us a great experience for our visitors who pay a high price to come and visit our islands," she said.

While speaking on the exciting news that the revitalization of the Garapan square is becoming more and more a reality, she also stated that the government isn't the only one responsible for the CNMI's

tourism industry.

"We can be better than this. Tourism is everybody's business. I'm calling every government agency, business, nonprofit, village community, and every individual to contribute," she said.

Cavanagh said that properties can be improved, hotels can upgrade their facilities, more signs can be posted, and anti-littering laws can and should be heavily enforced as all these contribute to island beautification.

"Homeowners need to address their properties, hotels need to invest and upgrade their property, but that's not all. The Anti-Littering Act needs to be enforced strongly and regularly. We would love to see regular publications of the number of citations issued and the revenue generated. Visitors are [also] asking for clearer signage for their safety.

We can be better," she said.

The Office of Planning and Development under the Office of the Governor and the Garapan Revitalization Task Force is spearheading the Garapan Revitalization project, using an \$8-million U.S. Economic Development Administration grant that aims to revive the CNMI's tourist district.

Phase I of the revitalization project is expected to be completed in April 2023. Phase I includes upgrading the Paseo de Marianas, Plumeria Road, Micro Beach Road, Ginger Avenue, Coconut Street, Coffee Tree Mall, Cpl. Derence Jack Road, and Royal Palm Avenue.

Phase II, which was supposed to occur between April and September, will cover Beach Road, between Garapan Street and Cpl. Derence Jack Road; Beach Road east side, between Cpl. Derence

Jack Road and Micro Beach Road; the rest of Coconut Street, Date Street, a portion of Royal Palm Avenue between Coconut Street and Paseo de Marianas and Coconut Street.

Phase III, which was set for September 2023 to January 2024, will cover the west side of Beach Road, the rest of Palm Street, the south side of Micro Beach Road, and the rest of Coral Tree Avenue.

Phase IV was expected to occur between January 2024 and May 2024, and will cover the stretch of Royal Palm Avenue between Paseo de Marianas and Micro Beach Road, the portion of Coffee Tree Mall between Paseo de Marianas and Micro Beach Road, the portion of Ginger Avenue between Paseo de Marianas and Micro Beach Road, and the portion of Plumeria Avenue between Cpl. Derence Jack Road and the rest of Coconut St.

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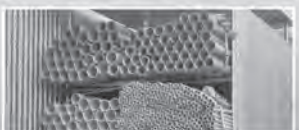


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UOG to launch new STEM magazine for kids

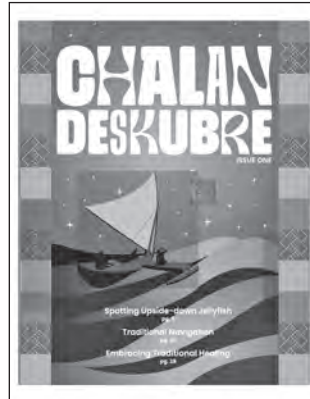
The University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant is set to launch *CHalan Deskubre* magazine tomorrow, Dec. 9, 2023, at the Micronesia Mall center court.

CHalan Deskubre is a place-based science magazine designed for children in Guam and the Northern Marianas. The magazine aims to inspire children to adopt a scientific mindset, encouraging exploration beyond the classroom.

"The *CHalan Deskubre* magazine features stories and

activities that incorporate local resources, ecosystems, traditions, and values, making it more relevant and meaningful for students in Guam and the wider region," said UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez. "Providing this tailored educational resource is crucial in nurturing a sense of pride and stewardship among our youth, fostering appreciation for the island's traditional wisdom and natural resources."

The inaugural issue delves into the convergence of science and traditional knowledge in Guam and the sur-



rounding region. Its stories and sections highlight how indigenous communities and their wisdom contribute to

The cover of *CHalan Deskubre*, a place-based science magazine designed for children in Guam and the Northern Marianas, is shown. The magazine will launch on Saturday, Dec. 9 at the Micronesia Mall center court.

scientific advancements and innovative practices.

"Our magazine, *CHalan Deskubre*, is crafted to ignite curiosity and discovery, guiding children on a path to scientific inquiry in our unique island environment," said Dr. Austin Shelton, director of

the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant. "Each issue of the magazine will offer informative content, interactive games, and engaging hands-on activities."

The UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant received funding from the Education Stabilization Funds for the Innovating Through Pandemic Challenges to Deliver Place-Based Education in Marine, Environmental, and Sustainability Sciences program, a part of the Governor of Guam's Education Assistance and Youth Empowerment Grant Program. (PR)

GCC's Adult Education Program to host open house on Dec. 13

Have you ever considered finishing high school but didn't know how? The Guam Community College Adult Education program will help you earn your high school diploma or its equivalency, GED (General Education Development).

Come to the Guam Community College Adult Education Program Open House on Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, at 10am on the second floor of Building 6000. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn more about GCC's adult education diploma program or GED process, tour the campus, and meet current students and graduates of the program.

The program includes ESL

» Those seeking high school diploma or equivalent encouraged to attend

(English as a Second Language) classes or refresher courses in math and English and is open to individuals 18 years-old and older, not enrolled in a high school.

"Open house attendees will meet the Adult Education Programs Team that will guide potential students through the enrollment process and help them achieve their educational goals. Achieving this milestone will lead to continuing their post-secondary journey or may open doors to career opportunities," said Mariasha Cruz-San Nicolas, GCC associate dean, Pre-Collegiate Programs, School of Trades and Professional Services.

For more information on this open house, contact GCC's Adult Education Program at 671-735-6010 or email gccadulthoodeducation@guamcc.edu. (PR)

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What I Wish for Christmas Drawing Contest

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No computer generated artwork allowed.

Draw what you wish for Christmas and tell us why. Add a short description in your drawing as to what is your Christmas wish and why.

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Sanitary inspections of food establishments in November

During the month of November, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Environmental Health Disease Prevention conducted sanitary inspections on retail, eating, and drinking establishments.

EHDP is providing (a) names of establishments by inspection grade, and (b) names of establishments which were ordered to close for serious violations of health and sanitation standards. For these establishments, the suspension date and the date they were certified to resume operations are provided.

Classifications for Food Safety Rating for an establishment receiving a score of:

- 0-10 Demerits
- 11-20 Demerits
- 21-30 Demerits
- 30 Closure/Suspension

Grade A: 27 establishment(s)

West Coast Restaurant, Susupe

1. R&J Quick Stop Retail, Garapan
2. 520 Restaurant, Garapan
3. Jacob's Mart, Chalan Kanoa
4. Tanapag Mobil Mart, Tanapag
5. Garapan Mobil Mart, Garapan
6. The Hut, Garapan
7. Clean Laundry Retail, San Antonio
8. MJ Market, Chalan Kanoa
9. Sweat Lane Café, Garapan
10. New Majestic House Restaurant Garapan,
11. Crystal Ice & Water Co., San Antonio
12. RJ Pizza Snack Bar, China Town
13. By Yours Truly, Garapan
14. Coconut Tei Restaurant, Garapan
15. Saipan Sunset Cruise Jade Lady III, Outer Marina Cove
16. New Garapan Market, Lower Navy Hill
17. Hafa Bean Coffee Shop, Garapan
18. Crowne Plaza Resort, Garapan
- Azucena Restaurant
- Terrace Restaurant
- Mai Teppen Yaki Restaurant
- Hibiscus Hall
- Mari Bar

19. Coral Ocean Golf Resort, Koblerville
- Ole Restaurant
- Pool Side Bar
- Hole In One Restaurant
20. Susan's, Susupe
- BBQ Stand
- Catering
21. Holy Macs Home Baking, China Town
- Catering
22. 123, Chalan Kanoa
- Retail
- Catering
23. Bourbon Street Bar Café, Garapan
- Restaurant
- Bar
24. D&Q Saipan Co. LTD, Lower Base
- Retail
- Wholesale
25. Joe's Bar – Steak House Capital, San Jose
- Restaurant
- Bar
26. EJ Chill & Grill Catering, Tinian

Grade B: 3 establishment(s)

1. Boo Ga Food, SanVicente — Catering
2. The Spirituality of Int'l Mission Training Center, San Vicente — Manufacturing of Noni Juice
3. Chagi Norf Kitchen, Tanapag — Catering

Grade C: 0 establishment(s) None

Establishment(s) ordered closed for serious violations of health and sanitation standards:

1. Marianas Water & Ice Co., Papago Suspended: 11/29/23
2. Diamond Water Co., Capital Hill Suspended: 11/29/23

For more information, contact the EHDP office at (670) 664-4870/72/73, or email the director of EHDP, John Tagabuel, at john.tagabuel@chcc.health. (PR)

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PL497608	2023	NISSAN	KICKS	SV	\$27,995	\$3,000	\$24,995
PY221463	2023	NISSAN	SENTRA	SV	\$27,995	\$3,000	\$24,995
PC550406	2023	NISSAN	LEAF	S	\$41,995	\$5,000	\$36,995
PC247526	2023	NISSAN	PATHFINDER 4WD	SV 4WD	\$55,995	\$6,000	\$49,995
PM310776	2023	NISSAN	Z-SPORT	SPORT	\$54,995	\$7,000	\$47,995
NN661007	2022	NISSAN	FRONTIER	S 2WD	\$44,995	\$8,000	\$36,995
PH538181	2023	HONDA	CIVIC	LX	\$31,495	\$3,000	\$28,495
PM730802	2023	HONDA	HRV	SPORT 2WD	\$34,995	\$3,500	\$31,495
PA011685	2023	HONDA	ACCORD	LX	\$36,995	\$4,000	\$32,995
NB084071	2022	HONDA	PILOT	SPORT AWD	\$49,995	\$6,000	\$43,995
PB043972	2023	HONDA	RIDGELINE	SPORT AWD	\$53,395	\$6,000	\$47,395
PX001820	2023	HONDA	CIVIC	TYPE-R	\$55,495	\$6,000	\$49,495
PB061584	2023	HONDA	ODYSSEY	TOURING	\$57,495	\$7,000	\$50,495
NRE30860	2022	FORD	BRONCO SPORT	BASE 4WD	\$42,495	\$5,000	\$37,495
NLD33458	2022	FORD	RANGER	XL 4X2	\$44,995	\$5,000	\$39,995
NGA50880	2022	FORD	EXPLORER	LIMITD 4WD	\$68,995	\$8,000	\$60,995
NLB25027	2022	FORD	BRONCO	OUTERBANKS	\$79,685	\$9,000	\$70,685

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Women's Work Wear Drive draws broad support



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Business donors, volunteers, and participants from the Center of Living Independently take a photo after the first session of the Office of Women's Affairs' Women's Work Wear Drive yesterday at the Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: AFH, Inc. dba Natural Nail Spa

THE POSITION: Beautician

NUMBER OF VACANCIES: 1

JOB DESCRIPTION: Provide beauty services such as: Shampooing, cutting, coloring, and styling hair, massaging, and treating scalp; Apply makeup, dress wigs; Perform hair removal; and Provide nail and skin care services.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION: Must be at least a High School graduate.

EXPERIENCE: Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as a Beautician.

OTHER SPECIAL SKILLS OR REQUIREMENTS Must know details of hair care and treatment, make-up, nail and skin care services, and other aspects of beauty enhancement.

JOB SITE: Chalan Pale Arnold Road (Middle Road), Gualo Rai, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

HOW TO APPLY: If interested, please submit or mail application and comprehensive resume, with supporting credentials to:

EDEN G. ORDAS
General Manager

AFH, INC. DBA NATURAL NAIL SPA

Office Address: : Chalan Pale Arnold Road (Middle Road), Gualo Rai, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Mailing Address: PMB 955, P.O. Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950

Email Address: edenfguillo@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: Tel. (670) 234-6245

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**

chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com

CORRESPONDENT

'Tis the season of giving, and the Office of Women's Affairs under the Office of

the Governor teamed up with generous donors to present the Women's Work Wear Drive yesterday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

At the event, many of the female participants receives special pampering, had light make-up done for them, plus hair and nail services done for free by Northern Marianas Technical Institute, Beauty by Hannah, and Salt and Barber technicians.

At the clothing section, they could choose up to four work outfits, as well as accessories for free, as well as take pictures with FJ Photography, and the 360 camera from Boboles Novelties.

Miss Bikini Marianas was also present to give a mini fashion show to display work outfit styles and wardrobe coordination, and Kiki's Boutique provided some stylish wallets, lipsticks, lashes and accessories for participants to take home.

The event held several rounds: One in the morning

from 9am to 11am, and two in the afternoon from 12pm to 1pm, and 1pm to 2pm.

The event was a collaborative effort between the WAO and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute's Cosmetology class, Miss Bikini Marianas, Kiki's Boutique, Boboles Novelties, FJ Photography, Salt & Barber, and Beauty by Hannah, as well as the many generous donors who contributed over a thousand dollars' worth of services and giveaways. Members of CNMI Youth Congress also volunteered. There was almost \$10,000 worth of donations at the event.

WAO's Joannie Laniyo said the event was initially supposed to be open to everyone, but the team decided to focus more on women who may really need it.

"We wanted to check first with the agencies that have folks who need the help," she said.

Some of the event's participants were from the Center for Living Independently, Karidat Social Services, and the Transitional Living Center.

The project has been two months in the making and Laniyo said that seeing it all come together was great. "We've had participants commenting, and thanking us for holding this for them," she said.

WAO volunteer Hannah Blanco played a major role in the inspiration and coordination of the event. "We really wanted to give back to women in the community that might need work wear at the end of the year, especially during the holiday season."

She said they have been collecting donations since October and she is grateful to all the anonymous donors who dropped off their donations in the drive, and all the businesses and organizations who donated.

"I'm just really happy and thankful that all of these businesses and organizations came together to host this. We really hope to do it again next year, and we hope to get more donations and more vendors that want to participate."

Blanco is also a part of NMTECH's Cosmetology, and having them participate meant a lot to her.

NMTECH donated nearly \$2,000 worth of services to the event. NMTECH outreach coordinator Ben Babauta said they brought the cosmetology class to showcase tips, tricks and easy techniques for women going into the workforce with things like nail, hair and skin care.

Laniyo said their goal was to empower women and, by working together, it seemed that that goal was reached.



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-24-003

Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of a waterline main, service laterals, connection to the existing waterline main, and the installation of fire hydrants.

The project is funded by a grant from the US Department of Interior/Office of Insular Affairs (US DOI/OIA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from US DOI/OIA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **210 calendar days** from the date of award of the contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **December 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-24-003, Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 27, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of **fifteen percent (15%)** of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A **Payment Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent and a **Performance Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 14, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Procurement & Supply Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.

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Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962

E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com



NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a special meeting is being called on Monday, December 11, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. at the Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom located in the Airport Fire Station, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes

II. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

III. SPECIAL MEETING ITEM(S):

1. WSP Presentation
2. Saipan Airport Tower Renovations CM Amendment
3. Saipan Airport Tower Construction Contract - Change Order No. 1
4. Tinian Airport Parking Lot Change Order
5. Supplemental Budget Request: Port of Saipan Harbor Patrol Vehicle
6. Airport Rules and Regulations: Parking Fees
7. Bridge Investment Group Lease Agreement
8. Report by Executive Director
9. Presentation by Micronesia Renewable Energy

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

V. MISCELLANEOUS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom.

Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 Passcode: 573227

JOSE C. AYUYU
Chairman, Board of Directors

2 SIS seniors awarded full scholarships via QuestBridge

Out of 23 seniors at Saipan International School, two of the school's students successfully made it to the 2023 QuestBridge National College Match, which means they get full four-year scholarships to two of the nation's best colleges. Stephanie Kim was matched at Wesleyan University and Lisha Lai was matched at Boston College.

The Match Scholarship is made up of a generous financial aid package provided by the college that covers the full cost of attendance, including tuition, housing and food, books and supplies, and travel expenses. The Match Scholarship is offered without loans or a parental contribution.

"It still feels surreal to know that I got matched to Boston College with a QuestBridge Scholarship," said Lai. "Becoming a finalist was already exciting enough, but being able to attend Boston College, a top-tier college that I love, is even more incredible."

Lai said it has always been her desire to go to Boston College since her junior year, "and now, I am beyond grateful and excited to be spending the next four years of my life at Boston College with a full ride."

She said this signifies a brand new stage in her life and a significant step toward achieving her academic goals.

"I have never felt happier, and witnessing the happiness on my parents' faces fills me with joy. I am deeply honored and grateful that all the hard work I put into my high school years and throughout the application process has been recognized. QuestBridge has truly helped me fulfill my dream," Lai added.

Kim recounts that, as she clicked the status update button to check on her application, seeing that she successfully made it felt like "the weight on my shoulders were instantly lifted, and I could finally let out a sigh. That moment still feels like a dream, and I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to pursue my dream career without burdening my parents. The pain of putting in the hard work now feels deeply satisfying, and I can't wait to share this gratitude with the community at Wesleyan University."

This is the fifth year in a row that SIS has had students match with QuestBridge. Starting in 2020, SIS Geckos have matched with Emory, Princeton and Wesleyan.

"In the past five years, we have had a Questbridge match every year but this is the first time we have ever had two matches," said SIS headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder. "We are all very proud of Stephanie and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan International School seniors Stephanie Kim, left, matched with Wesleyan University and Lisha Lai matched with Boston College.

Lisha. They are top-notch students and they have been recognized by two top-tier schools. These two scholarships will add up to over three-quarters of a million dollars for these two wonderful students."

The QuestBridge National College Match is a program that connects high-achieving high school seniors from low-income backgrounds with full four-year scholarships to 50 of the nation's best colleges.

This year, out of over 20,800 applicants, QuestBridge selected 6,683 Finalists to be considered for the QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship (Match Scholarship). This year, QuestBridge's 50 college partners matched with 2,242 Finalists, who are recognized as Match Scholarship Recipients. This is the highest number of Match Scholarship Recipients to date for QuestBridge,

according to a QuestBridge news release.

"We are thrilled to welcome this historic number of QuestBridge Scholars,"

said Ana Rowena Mallari, co-founder and CEO of QuestBridge. "These scholars will bring a depth of thought and range of experiences to our college partner campuses that will surely enrich their new communities."

Match Scholarship recipients are admitted early to QuestBridge college partners with full four-year scholarships provided by the colleges and universities, ensuring for these students and their families that an education at a top college is affordable. QuestBridge's partners include top colleges and universities such as Princeton, Brown, Claremont McKenna, Bowdoin, Columbia, Emory, MIT, Northwestern, Boston College, Swarthmore, Vanderbilt,

Wesleyan, and Williams.

This year's Match Scholarship recipients come from 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

These outstanding high school seniors have an average unweighted GPA of 3.94, and 93% are in the top 10% of their graduating class. Around 92% come from a household with an annual income under \$65,000, and 87% qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. The majority of this year's Match Scholarship recipients—82%—are among the first generation in their families to attend a four-year college in the United States. (PR)

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Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport "Car Rental Concession" **Request for Proposals** for: CPA-RFP-001-24 CPA Concession No. CRS-2023-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of two years with an option upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-Concession No. CRS-2023-01 is **December 6, 2023**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (Second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) by **or before 4:00 p.m. on January 9, 2024**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of \$100.00. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, or cashier's check payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

/s/
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

**PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP24-DCCA/CCDF-42400013**

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 03, 2024 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"CNMI Early Childhood Workforce Registry"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS BY DECEMBER 29, 2023, TO MRS. ESTER WABOL VIA EMAIL AT ewabol.ccdf@childcare.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ VIVIAN T. SABLAN
ACTING SECRETARY, DCCA

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Opinion

Hofa Adail

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Booting George Santos doesn't fix the GOP's Donald Trump-size problem with the truth

It's almost astonishing: Even with a slim Republican majority, the House of Representatives actually voted to expel New York GOP Congressman George Santos, after a searing Ethics Committee report last month laid out the damning case against him.

Santos allegedly stole money from donors for gambling junkets, high-end spa treatments and online porn subscriptions. Money laundering. Identity theft from family members. Wire fraud. Obstruction. His campaign treasurer pleaded guilty to charges related to Santos' misdeeds. The whole sordid mess is almost too much to tally.

Yet, can we note that Donald J. Trump is still besting his Republican competitors in the polls for their party's presidential nomination next year—and by a mile? Sure, Kansas' Koch machine has thrown its support behind Nikki Haley, and Fox News keeps trying to prop up Ron DeSantis' flailing campaign. (Even though Sean Hannity stacked the deck in DeSantis' favor in Thursday night's so-called "debate," cucumber-cool California Gov. Gavin Newsom just made the angry Florida governor come off like a clenched fist in a blue suit.)

Because the problem is what Fox, Rush Limbaugh, Joe Rogan, Bill Maher and above all social media have done to our politics. We're entering a third decade of the all-you-can-consume buffet of online information, and the pot-stirrers are all too happy that the average citizen doesn't know what's true or false anymore. The Soviet propagandists could scarcely have dreamed of a day when they could push Pravda's lies to a global audience—and that a culture that believes you can never trust the mainstream media would thrive on both right and left.

Don't believe us that delusion can be bipartisan? Go down the rabbit hole of pro-Hamas social media for a depressing lesson in how even educated civil libertarians can swallow lies.

We don't deny that ratings play a part in what even some supposedly fair-minded media sources tell their audiences. Former CNN International chief Tony Maddox really did say Trump was "good for business." And even while the network has largely been responsible about knocking down the showman's endless stream of dishonesty, it still continues to give his lies a platform by airing them in the first place. This is what normalizing looks like. Because sure, lots of politicians lie. But no, most of them don't come anywhere near Trump's level.

Media repeated campaign lies about health care

The Star isn't always perfect here, either. Our website at KansasCity.com recently ran a story from the wire services flatly repeating Trump's claim that he was working on his plan for health care reform if he retakes the White House. We know now, and did then, that his 2016 promises to fix our broken health care system were fiction, and that all his administration did in that arena was to try (and fail) to dismantle the crucial, increasingly popular Affordable Care Act.

See BOOTING on Page 11



Republicans are trying to redefine who's an American

Using specific dates to define entire eras is often a gimmick, a way of compressing wild and unwieldy life into a neatly artificial package. But some days, or years, just massively overproduce, leaving behind a nation, or world, transformed. As a quote typically attributed to Vladimir Lenin has it, "There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen."

For the reactionaries who drive Republican politics today, one year looms like Godzilla over a darkening conservative skyline: 1965. Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs had a jabberwocky hit song in "Wooly Bully," and President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Hart-Celler Immigration Act and the Voting Rights Act.

"Wooly Bully" isn't what bothers conservatives.

The Voting Rights Act and Hart-Celler profoundly altered the nation. As potent as each law was on its own terms, combined the two were monumental. In effect, one opened the door to nonwhite immigration, the other to nonwhite political power. For racial reactionaries, it's a frightening combination, which is why supporters of the immigration bill tried to calm conservative fears during debate. The law would not "upset the ethnic mix of our society," Sen. Edward Kennedy said.

It turned out that Kennedy was wrong. In 1960, whites constituted 88.6% of the U.S. population. By 2020, that number had fallen to 58.9%. In 1960, only 5% of the U.S. population was foreign-born. In 2020, it was 13.6%. On the 50th anniversary of the immigration act, in 2015, Pew Research Center reported that nearly 59 million immigrants had come to the U.S. since 1965.

None of that may matter to people who value pluralistic democracy over racial hegemony. But to those who prefer their power white, and their democracy weak, the consequences are stark. Black voters and white liberals alone could not have made Barack Obama president. Hispanic and Asian voters, the children of immigrants, were necessary to put Obama's multi-racial coalition in power.

For Republicans to compete nationwide, they must either lure some of those voters away from Democrats or keep them away from the polls. They have opted to try both.

For a while now, Republicans have been working to make it harder to vote, harder to count votes and harder for the electoral winners to reap the rewards of victory. Vote by mail, drop boxes and other efforts to make voting as convenient as, say, purchasing a firearm continue to be under attack. Conspiracy-minded conservatives—roughly 29% of the party is in thrall to QAnon

By **FRANCIS WILKINSON**
Bloomberg Opinion

Francis Wilkinson is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering U.S. politics and policy. Previously, he was executive editor for the Week and a writer for Rolling Stone.



according to a recent poll—advocate hand counts of ballots, which introduce error into counting rather than mitigating it. And when Ohio voters overwhelmingly passed a constitutional protection for abortion rights this year, Republican state legislators immediately began looking for ways to override the popular will, essentially seeking to nullify the vote.

Last month, in a case challenging legislative maps in Arkansas, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled 2-1 that only the U.S. Department of Justice—no private parties—could file voting rights challenges in court under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. If the radical ruling is allowed to stand it will effectively enable a president to undermine voting rights anywhere in the land, simply by telling a politicized Justice Department to ignore violations.

It's doubtful any of these concerted assaults on voting would be taking place absent the demographic changes initiated by the 1965 immigration act. Conservatives can't do very much about the demographic challenge; even a complete halt to immigration today would not alter the multi-racial trajectory of the 21st century. Lots of babies are still being born. But they can hobble democracy to preserve White overrepresentation in powerful institutions. That imbalance isn't restricted to the GOP in Congress. For instance, a Bloomberg Law analysis found that of the 94 federal district courts, 25 have never had a non-white judge.

Ultimately, the attack on voting is an attack on who gets to be an American and exercise the power and privileges that accompany that title. The American identity began to broaden beyond White natives in 1965, encompassing newly empowered Blacks (and Native Americans) and newly admitted immigrants. If conspiracy theorists really want to find the point when the dastardly "Great Replacement" of Whites in the U.S. began, they should stop troubling themselves with nonsense about the Southern border or shadowy billionaires. The birth of a multiracial nation took place in 1965 in Washington, DC. It was accomplished in public, by majority vote. Democratically.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY: DEC. 8, 1941

The day Saipan bombed Guam

By DON FARRELL
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Early in the morning of Dec. 8, 1941, long before daylight, a group of husky Carolinian men loaded bombs onto Imperial Japanese naval aircraft at Saipan's Aslito Airfield, as they had done for the last several mornings. As with every other day, Japanese pilots took off for what the Carolinian bomb loading team thought would be another bombing practice. It was not.

At 5:45am, the Naval Governor of Guam, George J. McMillin, received a message from Adm. Thomas Hart informing him that Japan had "commenced hostilities" by attacking Pearl Harbor.

At 6am, Hawaii time, a signal was sent from the Imperial Japanese Navy carrier Akagi that the fleet had successfully arrived at Pearl Harbor—undetected: "Tora, Tora, Tora!" The Imperial Japanese Navy had managed to secretly carry out the best organized and executed naval operation in Pacific history. They proceeded to destroy the American Pacific Fleet, at anchor, killing over 2,000 Americans.

It was only the beginning of a much larger operation.

"[S]ince the principle has been to accept a risk, whether we win the horse or lose the saddle," wrote Japanese Admiral Matome Ugaki in his diary, the order was given for Imperial Japanese Navy units to proceed with the other pre-planned attacks on targets in the western Pacific identified in Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's secret plan; Wake Island, the U.S. territory of the Philippines, as well as the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia that processed the oil Japan needed for its military machine.

In Guam, local Japanese cut the phone lines between the villages of Agaña and Sumay, forcing Naval Governor McMillan to use runners to maintain communications between the two most populated

villages on the island. McMillan ordered the evacuation of Agaña, Sumay, and the other main villages in Guam to get the people out of the way before the anticipated Japanese invasion. The Pan American Airways office at Sumay radioed Wake Island, telling them to recall the Pan Am Clipper that had left for Guam shortly before.

The Japanese planes that had left Saipan that morning began bombing and strafing Guam at 8:27am, attacking Agaña, Sumay, the Pan American Airways station, and the USS Penguin. Chamorros on their way to the cathedral for Mass on the anniversary of Our Lady of Camarin were killed by the strafing Japanese. Those already inside the cathedral were told to leave and find shelter outside of Agaña. Pandemonium set in as parents attempted to gather their children and get out of the town that housed nearly half the island's population. By noon, Agaña was a ghost town.

A primary strategic target for the Japanese planes attacking Guam were the two radio stations: Radio Agaña with its 300-foot tower and Radio Libugon, located about two miles southeast of Agaña, with four 300-foot radio direction finding antennas that were tracking Japanese radio traffic.

At 12:30pm Dec. 8, 1941, Eastern Standard Time, the U.S. Congress declared war on the Empire of Japan.

At 2:30am on Dec. 10, 5,500 men of the Imperial Japanese Army's South Seas Detachment under the command of Maj. Gen. Tomitaro Horii began the armed invasion of Guam. The first of the 400-man-strong elite Japanese invasion force landed at Agat Beach some two miles south of Sumay and began working their way north, thinking, somehow, that that they would be facing 1,500 Marines. Meanwhile, the main body of 5,000 Japanese invasion forces landed at Dungca's Beach on Tumon Bay and began marching south toward Agaña. A few minutes later, they ran into an open jitney carrying a family of 17 fleeing Agaña.

Thirteen of them were killed or wounded by Japanese machine-gun fire, followed by a bayonet attack.

In front of the Governor's Palace, 12 Marines from the Insular Patrol, a few Marines from Sumay, some administrative personnel, and about 80 men from the Guam Insular Guard, equipped with only three machine guns, a few pistols, and less than 50 old Springfield .303 bolt-action rifles, prepared to face the incoming Japanese forces. They managed to stop the Japanese onslaught, but only briefly.

Some 50 Chamorro civilians had been killed elsewhere that morning. The Japanese lost an estimated 200 men. A Japanese officer shouted for the defenders to lay down their weapons. The captured Americans were ordered to strip butt naked and sit on the ground. Fearing death, the Americans thought to themselves, "Our soul belonged to God, but the Emperor owned our ass."

The Naval Governor of Guam, Capt. George McMillin, surrendered Guam to the Japanese.

The Pacific War had begun, and Guam was the first American territory lost to the Japanese Empire.

The Japanese won the first round, but would lose the game when America returned to the islands in 1944.

■ ■ ■

Interestingly, Dec. 8 is also celebrated as Constitution Day in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, in memory of the day the CNMI Constitution was accepted by the United States as a prerequisite for completing the Covenant agreement with the United States, including the Technical Agreement related to the military leased lands on Tinian.

For more information, see:

Mansell, Roger. (2012) *Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.

Rogers, Robert F. *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam*. Honolulu, Ha: University of Hawaii Press, 1995.

((Mansell, p. 11), Twomey, p. 266)



ARIEL DIMALANTA

Illustrations by Ariel Dimalanta for Don Farrell's book, *Liberation-1944*.

BOOTING

From page 10

Way too many serious journalists still haven't internalized the lesson scholars have long warned us about: Airing would-be autocrats' lies, even to dispel them, is dangerous.

This is, unfortunately, what the vast conservative alternative news ecosystem has evolved into. The late Fox News Svengali Roger Ailes built the channel into a powerful Republican Party answer to both liberal and mainstream thought in the first 20 years of its existence. He capitalized on human beings' innate desire to think we're as smart as the experts, that we can "do our own research" and dig out the truth as well as any reporter or scientist. It's built into the rugged individualist spirit that created the Declaration of Independence.

Problem is, that spirit also enables the greedy opportunists who don't believe in government and institutions that have been cultivated over decades to keep society inside the guardrails. They know there's big money to be made by defanging the regulators and the tax fraud investigators—and the fact that the anti-everything circus makes the libs so angry is the cherry on top.

Donald Trump's feral genius is that he knows instinctively how to stoke the anger of the millions who don't think those institutions serve them anymore. In less than eight years, he's transformed the public face of his party from genteel patrician Mitt Romney and Clint Eastwood-esque John McCain into the jeering, ungovernable House now led by a speaker who was a primary architect of the Jan.

6, 2021, attempted government overthrow. Trump's closest presidential challengers talk of "slitting throats" of federal employees and making widespread, indiscriminate purges in their ranks.

So, good luck, Republican leaders. We know many of you are still rooted in reality. You've gotten rid of your highest-profile embarrassment in Congress for now. But until you—and much more

important, your deep-pocket donors—figure out a way to deal with the dishonest rot that's propelling a 91-time-indicted former reality TV star to the top of your ticket again next year, you've got issues far more serious than George Santos.

©2023 The Kansas City Star

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

KISS

If the CNMI doesn't learn the lessons taught by history then we are doomed to make the same mistake(s) and that has happened entirely too many times in the CNMI, as the-powers-that-be have yet to learn much of anything I've been teaching and preaching. Didn't we learn from paying the casino commissioners on Rota for years when there was no casino? Because we are making the same darn mistake with the Saipan casino commissioners who are costing us nearly half-a-million dollars a year for nothing!






While I strongly disagree with Rep. Marissa R. Flores on the bill to increase taxes on softdrinks, I want to commend her and offer my sincere kudos for her efforts to try and get the casino commissioners to resign. It's obvious they have messed up with their governance over the casino and now

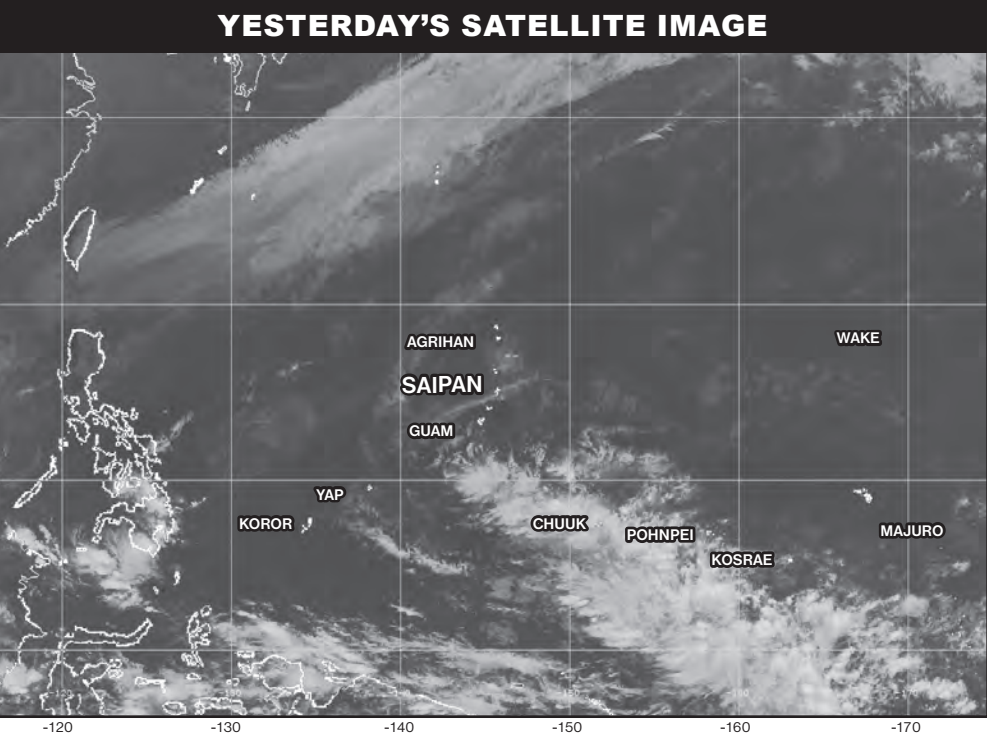
they are trying to string this mess out to 2032!

Our leaders and the casino commission have overlooked one of the most used methodologies of all time—the KISS method ("Keep it simple, stupid!"). Whenever things start to get complicated, we all know how almost anything can get messed up and that is exactly what the casino commission has been doing by making it complicated with their efforts to collect money that IPI does not have. The CC should have been going after IPI's stocks for everything owed the government and people. This simple approach would have even given our governor a real say in what happens to the monstrosity of a white elephant in Garapan and how to expedite completing the project. The CNMI could be selling IPI stocks instead of putting more taxes on people!

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of showers.	
87	78°	87	78°	87	78°	87	78°	87	78°



PICTURE TIME: 8:22 AM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar show partly cloudy skies and only a few showers across the Marianas this morning. The buoys reveal combined seas of 4 to 6 feet composed mainly of an east-northeast trade-wind swell with a smaller north swell and wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	87° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Saturday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Sunday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Monday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Tuesday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:01 AM	2:09 PM	-
Saturday	2:49 AM	2:45 PM	-
Sunday	3:40 AM	3:24 PM	-
Monday	4:34 AM	4:08 PM	-
Tuesday	5:33 AM	4:59 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	68° / 54°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	55° / 30°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74° / 70°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 68°	
London	Partly Cloudy	68° / 38°	
Los Angeles	Clear	68° / 50°	
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	91° / 77°	
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	93° / 63°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	75° / 68°	
New York	Mostly Cloudy	43° / 37°	
Osaka	Sunny	59° / 45°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	53° / 45°	
Busan	Windy	63° / 53°	
Rome	Rain	53° / 43°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	58° / 35°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	63° / 52°	
Seoul	Sunny	62° / 46°	
Tokyo	Sunny	60° / 43°	
Washington, DC	Cloudy	48° / 34°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:24 AM	High Tide	1.15	
9:42 AM	Low Tide	0.64	
4:06 PM	High Tide	1.65	
11:12 PM	Low Tide	0.20	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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IN MOVE AIMED TO BOLSTER MARITIME SECURITY

Coast Guard conducts security boarding at Port of Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boarding Team, a key component of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, conducted a thorough security boarding of the 380-foot (116-meter) motor vessel *Papa Mau*, flagged from Antigua Barbuda, at the Port of Guam on Dec. 6, 2023.

This general cargo vessel, arriving from Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia, was meticulously inspected upon reaching Guam and found to be in full compliance.

The fact the port in Pohnpei is working to meet U.S. International Port Security Standards but has not yet achieved this status, and the vessel crew took no other advance notice or security actions necessitated this boarding. The operation ensured the vessel's crew complement matched its manifest and other security measures were in place. This step is crucial for maintaining the high maritime safety and security standards that the U.S. Coast Guard and the Port of Guam uphold.



U.S. COAST GUARD/LT. BRIAN MAFFUCCI

A U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boarding Team conducts a thorough security boarding of the 380-foot (116-meter) motor vessel *Papa Mau*, flagged from Antigua Barbuda, at the Port of Guam on Dec. 6, 2023.

This operation comes after the U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security Program's successful bilateral exchange with FSM in Chuuk and Pohnpei. Held from Oct. 15 to 19, this initiative aimed to enhance compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. This collaboration underscores the mutual commitment to maritime safety and envi-

ronmental stewardship in the Pacific region.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Bruce, leading the Sector Boarding Team as the boarding officer, praised his team's efforts: "Our team's professionalism and flexibility are key in providing essential services to ensure maritime security in Micronesia. We're committed to maintaining safe and secure

maritime routes, vital for the region's prosperity."

The U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boarding Team in Guam is pivotal in safeguarding the port's security. Working in synergy with other units, including the Joint Rescue Sub-Center and fast response cutters, the team significantly contributes to the U.S. Coast Guard's robust presence in the Pacific.

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam is renowned for its comprehensive approach to executing various statutory missions. These include search and rescue, defense readiness, and protection of living marine resources. A significant focus remains on ensuring smooth maritime commerce and security of ports, waterways, and coastal areas.

The ISPS Code, integral to these operations, is a vital global standard for maritime security. Instituted post-9/11, it aims to detect and prevent security threats in international maritime transport. The Federated States of Micronesia, as a



U.S. COAST GUARD/LT. BRIAN MAFFUCCI

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CHCC Children's Clinic plays host to Shriners Children's Hawaii visitors

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., in collaboration with Shriners Hospitals for Children Hawaii, provided much needed orthopedic services to children, children with special healthcare needs, and adolescents aged 0-18 years in the CNMI from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2, 2023.

A total of 108 CNMI

children were served, 84 of whom were returning patients and 24 new patients from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Some patients were identified as needing treatment services and referred to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Shriners Hospitals for Children Hawaii also co-



Dr. Jonathan Pellett (orthopedic physician), Vena Joco, APRN (orthopedic nurse practitioner), and Sandy Zukeran (outreach coordinator) from the Shriners Hospitals for Children Hawaii conduct an outreach at the Children's Clinic of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2, 2023.



ordinates referrals to other pediatric specialty healthcare providers that are not readily available here in the CNMI, such as neurology consults and genetics consults. Shriners will accept any patient with orthopedic concerns from ages birth to 17 years old, regardless of their ability to pay.

This outreach clinic was made possible through an agreement between the CHCC and the Shriners Hospitals for Children Hawaii

and supported by the staff of the CHCC Children's Clinic and the Division of Public Health Services.

For more information on the next Shriners Hospitals for Children Hawaii Outreach Clinic and any orthopedic concerns, or other children's health concerns, contact the CHCC Children's Clinic at (670) 234-8951 or the CHCC Public Health Services Maternal, Infant, Child, and Adolescent Health Programs at (670) 236-8709. (PR)

signatory to the SOLAS convention, is actively working towards full compliance with the ISPS Code.

Looking forward, the U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security Program plans to conduct biannual visits to FSM. These visits are pivotal for fostering collaboration and ensuring continuous progress in meeting ISPS compliance.

One cannot overstate the strategic value of Guam as a hub for the U.S. Coast Guard's operations in the region. As a gateway to the Pacific, Guam is crucial in bolstering mari-

time security and facilitating safe and efficient maritime commerce.

As FSM continues its journey toward ISPS compliance, the U.S. Coast Guard's role in ensuring port security and fostering international maritime cooperation remains more critical than ever. Through these collaborative efforts, the U.S. Coast Guard and its partners in the Pacific are setting a solid example of commitment to maritime safety, security, and stewardship. (U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam)

Business

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness relocates to CK

Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness has consolidated its Oleai and Kagman facilities into a new modern facility at the old Meena's building in Chalan Kanoa.

The new and much-improved local fitness gym now occupies both floors of the old Meena's building, encompassing 10,000 square feet in total—5,000 square feet of gym space for each floor.

The new Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness has everything one would expect in a modern U.S. mainland gym and more, according to owner Derek Cutting.

Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness in Chalan Kanoa boasts of a 1,000-square-foot spin/yoga class studio, a cardio room, a recovery spa that has a four-person infrared sauna, and a cold plunge tub.

It also has a functional fitness area with custom Latte Built turf, an Olympic power lifting area with five squat rig stations, plus five Olympic platforms, and men's and women's locker rooms with multiple commodes and showers.



MARK RABAGO
Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness' new location is at the old Meena's Building in Chalan Kanoa.

The new location at Saipan's first capital also has a brand-new fleet of spin bikes for a spin class, more treadmills, more strength equipment, more mirrors, a heavy bag section along with a full-blown MMA fight octagon.

Cutting said consolidating both gyms and the eventual move to south of the island took years in the making.

"We've been looking to pur-



MARK RABAGO

The state-of-the-art gym has 10,000 square feet in total—5,000 square feet of gym space for each floor.

chase land and build our own building for almost three years now. After several possibilities, nothing was working out. Back in March 2023 one of our realtors reached out to us with the opportunity to purchase the lease to the existing (formerly) Meena's building."

Cutting said the move came out of necessity as the location in Oleai had been quite damaged from the three or four typhoons in the past eight years "to a point it was no longer serving our needs."

On the other hand, Cutting was forced to give up the Kag-

man location due to higher rent. "The issue was rent increased exponentially every year or two to where that no longer made sense to remain either. We needed our own permanent location and this building just made sense."

For the benefit of those who

want to build up a sweat and those who want to stay cool, Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness has the best of both worlds.

"Some rooms have air-con such as the locker rooms, sauna room, and cardio room. The main fitness rooms to include the class studio have open air windows for a nice breeze all day long. Having the tall Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel directly to our west works perfectly to our advantage as a major sun shade from noon time to sunset," said Cutting.

Latte Built 24-Hour Fitness will have a grand opening for its Chalan Kanoa location tomorrow at 1pm.

For more information, call (670) 235-2265, email latte-built@gmail.com, or click on their website <http://www.latte-built.com/>. New sign-ups can come in to see their staff between 8am and 8pm, Monday-Friday, and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays.

White House delays menthol cigarette ban, alarming anti-smoking advocates

WASHINGTON (AP) - White House officials will take more time to review a sweeping plan from U.S. health regulators to ban menthol cigarettes, an unexpected delay that anti-tobacco groups fear could scuttle the long-awaited rule.

Administration officials indicated Wednesday the process will continue into next year, targeting March to implement the rule, according to an updated regulatory agenda posted online. Previously, the rule was widely expected to be published in late 2023 or early January.

The Food and Drug Administration has spent years developing the plan to eliminate menthol, estimating it could prevent 300,000 to 650,000 smoking deaths over several decades. Most of those preventable deaths would be among Black Americans, who disproportionately smoke menthols.

Previous FDA efforts on menthol have been derailed by tobacco industry pushback or competing political priorities across several administrations. The latest delay comes amid lingering worries from some Democrats about President Joe Biden's prospects in a rematch against Donald Trump.

Anti-smoking groups have spent years backing the effort. And some warned on

Wednesday that the proposal, which would give cigarette companies one year to phase out the flavor, could be held up indefinitely.

"Any delay in finalizing the FDA's menthol rule would be a gift to the tobacco industry at the expense of Black lives," said Yolanda Richardson, CEO of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "We urge the administration to keep its promise and issue a final rule by the end of this year."

Menthol is the only cigarette flavor that wasn't banned under the 2009 law that gave the FDA authority over tobacco products. The flavor's cooling effect makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit, driving menthol's popularity. An estimated 85% of Black smokers buy menthols.

FDA officials sent their final version of the regulation to the White House's Office of Management and Budget in October, typically the last step before a rule is released.

But the White House has agreed to hold dozens of meetings with groups opposing the rule, including civil rights advocates, business owners and law enforcement officials. In nearly all cases, the groups opposing the ban have received donations from tobacco companies.

House backs GOP bill to block EPA rule on tailpipe pollution

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Republicans approved a bill Wednesday to block strict new tailpipe pollution limits proposed by the Biden administration, calling the plan a back-door mandate for electric vehicles.

A rule proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency would require that up to two-thirds of new vehicles sold in the U.S. are electric by 2032, a nearly tenfold increase over current EV sales. The proposed regulation, announced in April, would set tailpipe emissions limits for the 2027 through 2032 model years that are the strictest ever imposed — and call for far more new EV sales than the auto industry agreed to less than two years ago.

The EPA says it is not imposing an EV mandate, but Republicans say the plan favors EVs and punishes gas engines, forcing Americans into cars and

trucks they can't afford.

"Americans should have the right to decide what products and appliances work best for their family, not the federal government," said Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Mich., the bill's chief sponsor.

The proposed EPA regulation would drive up costs for motorists "and hand the keys of America's auto industry to China," Walberg said, referring to that country's dominance over the EV battery supply chain.

The measure was approved 221-197 and now goes to the Senate, where it is unlikely to advance. Five Democrats—Reps. Henry Cuellar and Vicente Gonzalez of Texas; Don Davis of North Carolina; Jared Golden of Maine; and Mary Peltola of Alaska—voted with Republicans to block the EPA rule.

New EVs typically cost more than gas-powered cars,

although prices have declined in recent months as supplies have increased and tax credits for EV purchases approved in the 2022 climate law have taken effect. EVs also have lower operating costs because they don't require gasoline.

The average transaction price for EVs was \$53,469 in July, compared with \$48,334 for gas-powered cars, according to Kelley Blue Book, an automotive research company. Tesla contributed to a substantial drop in EV prices since late last year as it cut prices, the research company said.

The White House strongly opposes the GOP bill and said in a statement that President Joe Biden would veto the measure if it reaches his desk.

The bill would "catastrophically impair EPA's ability to issue automotive regulations that protect public health, save consumers money, strengthen

American energy security and protect American investments in the vehicle technologies of the future," the White House said in a statement.

EPA's proposed standards for passenger cars and light trucks are performance-based, the White House said, and allow vehicle manufacturers to choose the mix of technologies best suited for their customers.

More than 100 EV models are now available in the U.S. alongside hybrid and gas-powered options, "giving Americans unprecedented flexibility in where and how they choose to fuel," the White House said. The EPA proposal could save Americans thousands of dollars over a vehicle's lifetime by accelerating adoption of technologies that reduce fuel and maintenance costs along with pollution, the White House said.

Nation

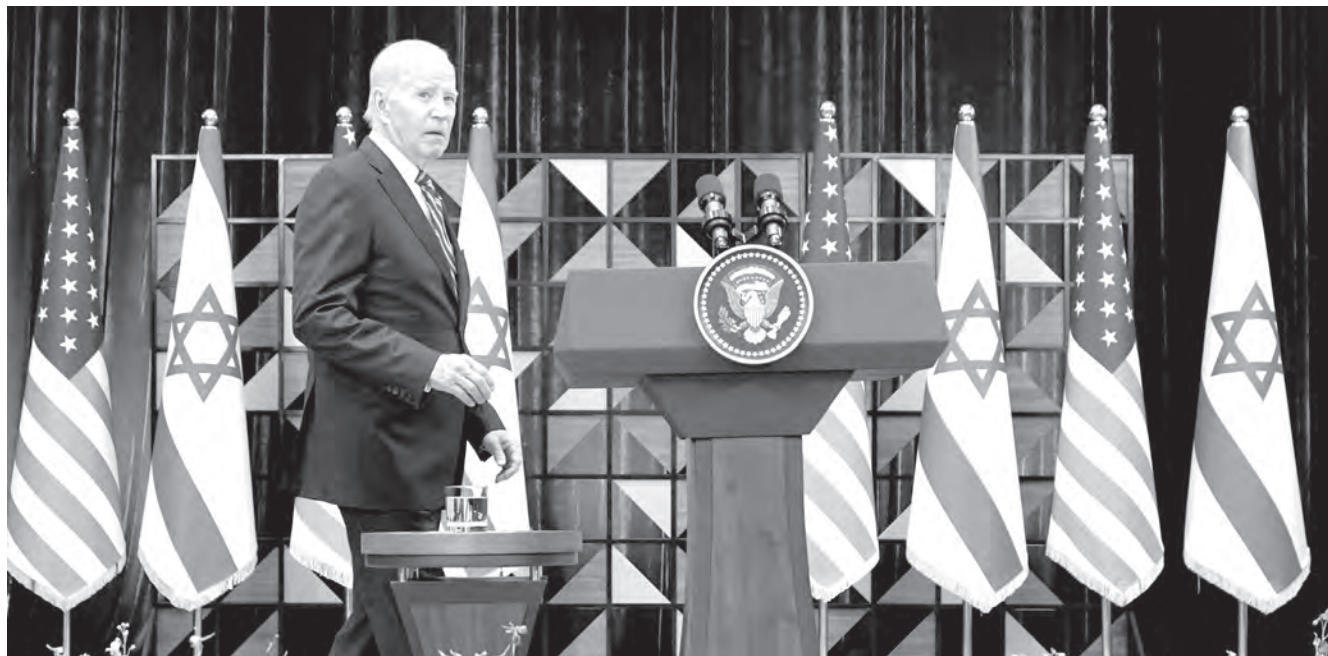
AP-NORC POLL SAYS

Democratic support for Biden ticks up on handling of Israel-Hamas war

WASHINGTON (AP)—Democratic views on how President Joe Biden is handling the decades-old conflict between Israelis and Palestinians have rebounded slightly, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The shift occurred during a time in which Biden and top U.S. officials expressed increased concern about civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip, emphasized the need for a future independent Palestinian state and helped secure the release of hostages held by Hamas during a temporary truce.

Fifty-nine percent of Democrats approve of Biden's approach to the conflict, a tick up from 50% in November. His latest standing is roughly equivalent to Democrats' 57% approval rating for him on the issue in an August poll, conducted well before the lat-



President Joe Biden walks to the podium to deliver remarks on the war between Israel and Hamas after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023, in Tel Aviv.

est war began on Oct. 7 when Hamas attacked Israel.

Still, the issue remains divisive among Democrats, who are less enthusiastic about

Biden's handling of the war than his overall job performance. Seventy-five percent of Democrats said Biden is doing well as president, also up slightly from 69% last month. His approval rating among U.S. adults stands at 41%.

Views on the Middle East could shift again now that fighting has resumed in the Gaza Strip, where Hamas is headquartered and thousands of Palestinian civilians have been killed by Israeli strikes.

Greg Baird, 61, said Biden is "doing the best he can with a really, really bad situation."

"It's a high wire act," Baird said. The owner of a print shop in Georgia, he began voting for Democrats after President Donald Trump took office.

"Israel is an ally," Baird said. "Our strongest ally in that part of the world. We have to stand by them."

Ginger Sommers, 47, had a similar view.

"I think what he's doing

right now is the best that he can do," said Sommers, a registered Democrat who owns a restaurant in Arkansas.

"If Trump was in office, lord knows what would be going on," she added. "I don't even want to think about that."

Biden has defended his approach to the war, which has included steadfast support for Israel. He's argued that his closeness with Israeli leadership has enabled more humanitarian aid to reach civilians

in Gaza. He's also expressed increased reservations about the Palestinian death toll and emphasized the need for an independent Palestinian state.

"I've been very straightforward and blunt with our Israeli friends in private about what I think they have to do and the burden they have and the commitment they have from me and my administration," Biden said at a campaign fundraiser in Boston this week.

Biden has needed to balance several goals during the conflict, some of which could prove to be in contention with each other as fighting between Israel and Hamas continues.

There's wide agreement that it's important for the U.S. to recover hostages being held in Gaza by Hamas. Although some have been released, others remain in Gaza after being kidnapped in Israel. Sixty-seven percent of U.S. adults call freeing hostages an extremely or very important goal, with majorities of Democrats and Republicans in agreement.

There's less unanimity on other issues, however. Sixty-four percent of Democrats said it's at least very important for the U.S. to negotiate a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, as opposed to 35% of Republicans.

Vegas shooter who killed 3 was professor who recently applied for a job at UNLV

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Terrified students and professors cowered in classrooms and dorms as a gunman roamed the floors of a University of Nevada, Las Vegas building, killing three people and critically wounding a fourth before dying in a shootout with police.

The gunman in Wednesday's shooting was a professor who had unsuccessfully sought a job at the school, a law enforcement official with direct knowledge of the investigation told The Associated Press. He previously worked at East Carolina University in North Carolina, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information publicly.

The attack was the worst shooting in the city since October 2017, when a gunman killed 60 people and wounded more than 400 after opening fire from the window of a room at Mandalay Bay casino on the world-famous Las Vegas Strip only a couple miles from the UNLV campus.

Lessons learned from that shooting—the deadliest in modern U.S. history—helped authorities to work "seamlessly" in reacting to the UNLV attack, Sheriff Kevin McMahon said at a news conference.

At about 11:45 a.m., the gunman opened fire on the

fourth floor of the building that houses UNLV's Lee Business School, then went to several other floors before he was killed in a shootout with two university police detectives outside the building, UNLV Police Chief Adam Garcia said.

Authorities gave the all-clear about 40 minutes after the first report of an active shooter.

Three people were killed and a fourth was hospitalized in critical but stable condition, police said.

It wasn't immediately clear how many of the school's 30,000 students were on campus at the time, but McMahon said students had been gathered outside the building to eat and play games. If police hadn't killed the attacker, "it could have been countless additional lives taken," he said.

"No student should have to fear pursuing their dreams on a college campus," the sheriff said.

Police didn't immediately identify the victims, the attacker or the motive and didn't say what kind of weapon was used, although some witnesses reported hearing as many as 20 shots fired.

UNLV professor Kevaney Martin took cover under a desk in her classroom, where another faculty member and three students took shelter with her.

Survivors of Pearl Harbor returning to honor those who died 82 years ago

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP)—Ira "Ike" Schab had just showered, put on a clean sailor's uniform and closed his locker aboard the USS Dobbin when he heard a call for a fire rescue party.

He went topside to see the USS Utah capsizing and Japanese planes in the air. He scurried back below deck to grab boxes of ammunition and joined a daisy chain of sailors feeding shells to an anti-aircraft gun up above. He remembers being only 140 pounds (63.50 kilograms) as a 21-year-old, but somehow finding the strength to lift boxes weighing almost twice that.

"We were pretty startled. Startled and scared to death," Schab, now 103, said at his home in Beaverton, Oregon, where he lives with his daughter. "We didn't know what to expect and we knew that if anything happened to us, that would be it."

Eighty-two years later, Schab plans to return to Pearl Harbor Thursday on the anniversary of the attack to remember the more than 2,300 servicemen killed. He's expected to be one of just

six survivors at a ceremony commemorating the assault that propelled the United States into World War II. The actual number may fluctuate depending on how many of the increasingly frail men are able to attend.

The aging pool of Pearl Harbor survivors has been rapidly shrinking. There is now just one crew member of the USS Arizona still living, 102-year-old Lou Conter of California. Two years ago, survivors who attended the 80th anniversary remembrance ceremony ranged in age from 97 to 103. They'll be even older this time.

David Kilton, the National Park Service's interpretation, education and visitor services lead for Pearl Harbor, noted that for many years survivors frequently volunteered to share their experiences with visitors to the historic site. That's not possible anymore.

"We could be the best storytellers in the world and we can't really hold a candle to those that lived it sharing their stories firsthand," Kilton said. "But now that we are losing that generation and won't have them very much longer, the opportunity

shifts to reflect even more so on the sacrifices that were made, the stories that they did share."

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs doesn't keep statistics for how many Pearl Harbor survivors are still living. But department data show that of the 16 million who served in World War II, only about 120,000 were alive as of October and an estimated 131 die each day.

There were about 87,000 military personnel on Oahu at the time of the attack, according to a rough estimate compiled by military historian J. Michael Wenger.

Schab never spoke much about Pearl Harbor until about a decade ago. He's since been sharing his story with his family, student groups and history buffs. And he's returned to Pearl Harbor several times since.

The reason? "To pay honor to the guys that didn't make it," he said.

Thursday's ceremony will be held on a field across the harbor from the USS Arizona Memorial, a white structure that sits above the rusting hull of the battleship, which exploded in a fireball and sank shortly after

being hit. More than 1,100 sailors and Marines from the Arizona were killed and more than 900 are entombed inside.

A moment of silence will be held at 7:55 a.m., the same time the attack began on Dec. 7, 1941.

The Dobbin lost three sailors, according to Navy records. One was killed in action and two died later of wounds suffered when fragments from a bomb struck the ship's stern. All had been manning an anti-aircraft gun.

That Sunday morning had started peacefully for Schab. He was expecting a visit from his brother, who was also in the Navy and was assigned to a naval radio station in Wahiawa, north of Pearl Harbor. The two never did get together that day.

Schab spent most of World War II in the Pacific with the Navy, going to the New Hebrides, now known as Vanuatu, and then the Mariana Islands and Okinawa.

He was never wounded. He told the Best Defense Foundation in an online interview three years ago that he must have had a guardian angel.

Asia

TO DISCUSS N. KOREA THREAT

National security advisers of US, S. Korea, Japan to meet



AP

This photo provided by the North Korean government shows what the country said is the launch of the Malligyong-1, a military spy satellite, into orbit on Nov. 21, 2023.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The national security advisers of the United States, South Korea and Japan will meet in Seoul this week to discuss North Korea's growing military threat and other regional security issues as they continue to promote trilateral cooperation in Asia.

South Korea's presidential office said its national security office director, Cho Tae-yong, will host a three-way meeting in Seoul on Saturday with U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan and Japanese National

Security Secretariat Secretary General Takeo Akiba for in-depth discussions on North Korea and other matters related to security, technology, and trade. Cho will also hold bilateral meetings with Sullivan and Akiba on Friday.

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said the meetings will be driven by a "robust agenda of discussions of regional issues of mutual concerns, particularly in the security environment" as the countries continue to build on

an August summit between their leaders in Camp David, where they vowed to deepen three-way security and economic cooperation.

Japan's prime minister's office said the discussions on North Korea will include that country's recent launch of its first military reconnaissance satellite, a device North Korean leader Kim Jong Un described as crucial for monitoring U.S. and South Korean military movements and enhancing the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles.

agency responders, worked to extricate the victims from the wreckage. They used stretchers and ropes to bring the victims up the ravine in an hourslong rescue and retrieval work that dragged late into the night, Pabustan said. "It's so tragic and painful because this happened close to Christmas," Pabustan said, adding that among the dead was a baby, who remained unidentified. The search for victims ended overnight but provincial officials urged village leaders to alert emergency personnel if they find any more victims in the site of the accident, a thickly wooded area in the bottom of the ravine. Deadly road accidents are common in the Philippines because of weak enforcement of traffic laws, dilapidated vehicles and dangerous road conditions, including inadequate safety signs and barriers in mountain roads and far-flung provinces.

3 killed at massive fire in Pakistan's largest southern city of Karachi, officials say

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—A massive fire broke out Wednesday at a multi-story commercial building in Pakistan's largest southern port city

of Karachi, killing at least three people and damaging several shops, police and rescue officials said. The fire started at a furniture store and quickly engulfed other shops on the ground floor of the building known as Ayesha Manzil, said Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab. He said firefighters doused the flames after hectic efforts. Wahab and hospital officials said three people died in the blaze and one person was injured. TV footage showed billowing into the sky as flames engulfed parts of the building. The cause of the fire was not immediately clear and officers said they were still investigating. Most structures in Karachi, and other parts of the country, lack fire prevention and firefighting systems, which often results in damages and casualties. Karachi is the capital of southern Sindh province, where such incidents are common. Wednesday's blaze came less than two weeks after a fire tore through a shopping mall in Karachi, killing 11 people. In the deadliest such incident, 260 people were killed after being trapped inside a garment factory when a fire broke out in the city in 2012.

World

Fighting between Israel and Hamas rages in Khan Younis

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israeli troops battled Hamas militants Wednesday in the center of the Gaza Strip's second-largest city, the military said. The ground offensive has sent tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing to the territory's southernmost edge and prevented aid groups from delivering food, water and other supplies.

Two months into the war, Israel's offensive into southern Gaza was bringing to Khan Younis the same fierce urban fighting and intensified bombardment that obliterated much of Gaza City and the north of the territory in recent weeks.

But in the south, the areas where Palestinians can seek safety are rapidly shrinking. Ahead of the assault, Israel urged residents to evacuate Khan Younis, the childhood home of two top Hamas leaders. But much of the city's population remains in place, along with large numbers who were displaced from northern Gaza and are unable to leave or wary of fleeing to the disastrously overcrowded far south.

Cut off from outside aid, people in United Nations-run shelters in Khan Younis are fighting over food, said

Nawraz Abu Libdeh, a shelter resident who has been displaced six times.

"The hunger war has started," he said. "This is the worst of all wars."

The U.N. says some 1.87 million people — over 80% of the population of 2.3 million — have already fled their homes, many of them displaced multiple times. Almost the entire population is now crowded into southern and central Gaza, dependent on aid.

Late Wednesday, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres used a rarely exercised power to warn the Security Council of an impending "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza and urged members to demand a cease-fire. He invoked Article 99 of the U.N. Charter, a step no U.N. chief has taken in half a century, which says the secretary-general may inform the council of matters believed to threaten international peace and security.

Israel accused the U.N. chief of "a new moral low" and "bias against Israel." The United States signaled it would not support Security Council action.

Earlier Wednesday, U.N. High Commissioner for Hu-

man Rights Volker Türk said, "Palestinians in Gaza are living in utter, deepening horror." Speaking at a news conference in Geneva, he said that "my humanitarian colleagues have described the situation as apocalyptic."

Israel's campaign has killed more than 16,200 people in Gaza—most of them women and children—and wounded more than 42,000, the territory's Health Ministry said late Tuesday. The agency has said many are also trapped under rubble. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths.

Israel has vowed to fight on, saying it can no longer accept Hamas rule or the group's military presence in Gaza after the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. Hamas and other militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took captive some 240 people in that attack.

An estimated 138 hostages remain in Gaza after more than 100 were freed during a cease-fire in late November. Their plight and accounts of rape and other atrocities committed during the rampage have deepened Israel's outrage and further galvanized support for the war.

UN: Russia intensifies attacks on Ukraine's energy facilities, worsening humanitarian conditions

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Intensifying Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy facilities are worsening humanitarian conditions across the war-torn country, where heavy snow and freezing temperatures have already arrived, U.N. officials said Wednesday.

Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenca told the U.N. Security Council that Russia's continuing daily attacks on Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure have resulted in civilian casualties, and Moscow recently escalated its barrages in populated areas including the capital, Kyiv.

"All attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure must stop immediately," he said. "They are prohibited under international humanitarian law and are simply unacceptable."

Jenca also raised the risks to all four of Ukraine's nuclear power plants.

The Zaporizhzhia plant, which is Europe's largest,

suffered its eighth complete off-site power outage since the invasion on Saturday, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Jenca said. And IAEA staff at the Khmelnytsky plant in western Ukraine reported hearing several explosions close by on Nov. 29.

Ramesh Rajasingham, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator, told the council "the deaths, injuries and level of destruction of vital civilian infrastructure is staggering."

"Many people have been left without access to heat, electricity and water, particularly in the east and south," he said. "Amid freezing temperatures, this damage is particularly threatening the survival of the most vulnerable—among them the elderly and those with disabilities."

After more than 21 months of fighting since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Rajasingham said, "millions of children, women

and men are now faced with the prospect of yet another winter of severe hardship amid the impact of increased attacks on hospitals, electricity transmission systems, and gas and water supplies."

U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood reminded the council that last winter "Russia sought to destroy Ukraine's energy infrastructure and deprive people of heat and electricity at the coldest time of the year."

The United States expects Russia to try again this winter, he said, noting that it has already carried out air strikes "that appear to target defensive systems put in place to protect energy infrastructure."

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky accused Western nations of calling the council meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine without anything extraordinary happening in order "to spew anti-Russian invective."

Off the Wall

BLUE OVER 'GOBLUE'

Michigan University alumnus sues after losing license plate

BEVERLY HILLS, Mich. (AP)—A passionate University of Michigan graduate is booing the state—and suing—over the loss of his revered “GOBLUE” car license plate.

Joseph Hardig III said the plate has been on family vehicles for years. But he was told it was assigned to another car owner when he recently tried to renew it at a Secretary of State office.

“My dad’s passed away. I got it from him. It’s meaningful to me. We’re just huge fans and love the university,” Hardig told The Detroit News.

Hardig, a suburban Detroit lawyer, is asking a judge to block the state from giving the plate to an Ann Arbor man, who is also a University of Michigan graduate and lives just minutes from the football stadium.

The Secretary of State won’t comment on the dispute.

Judge James Redford declined to grant a temporary restraining order Thursday. He said the state had not been served with the lawsuit yet, and there was no threat of “irreparable injury” to Hardig at this stage.

Hardig, 65, said he visited a branch office on Nov. 4, a month before the plate renewal deadline, and was told “GOBLUE” was no longer available for his Ford Edge.

Blue is a University of Michigan color, and “Go Blue!” is a battle cry and common salutation among Wolverine fans.

The personalized plate now has been assigned to Jonathan Fine and his 2007 BMW, though he said he hadn’t received it in the mail by Thursday.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Deer breaks into a NJ elementary school. Its escape was caught on police bodycams

TOMS RIVER, N.J. (AP)—A New Jersey elementary school had an unexpected visitor over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend: A deer jumped through a small window and knocked over items in a classroom before fleeing the building. A man walking his dog around 10 p.m. on Nov. 25 saw the young deer smash through a window at Cedar Grove Elementary School in Toms River, which is about 60 miles east (96.5 kilometers) of Philadelphia. The man notified police, and their subsequent search of the school was recorded by the officers’ bodycams. When officers encountered the deer in a stairwell, the animal—who police have nicknamed “Rudolph”—initially charged at them as it ran down a hallway. It then entered a classroom by opening a door that happened to be unlatched and jumped onto a bookshelf, scattering some items—but it didn’t cause any major damage. The officers eventually used a dog snare to get the deer out of the classroom, and it soon fled the building the same way it got in. Authorities said the animal didn’t appear to be seriously injured. School staffers boarded up the window and cleaned up after the deer’s escape.

Italian officials secure 12th century leaning tower in Bologna to prevent collapse

MILAN (AP)—Officials have secured the area around one of two 12th Century towers that have become symbolic of the northern city of Bologna, fearing its leaning could lead to collapse. The city on Friday announced 4.3 million euros (\$4.7 million) in works to shore up the Garisenda tower, one of the so-called Two Towers that look out over central Bologna, providing

inspiration over the centuries to painters and poets and a look-out spot during conflicts. Work will proceed during January and February. Italy’s civil protection agency has maintained a yellow alert on the site, denoting caution but not imminent danger. The Garisenda, the shorter of two towers built between 1109 and 1119, currently stands 48 meters (157 feet) feet to the Asinelli’s 97 meters (320 feet). Mayor Matteo Lepore noted in a debate earlier this month that the Garisenda tower has leaned since it was built “and has been a concern ever since.” It sustained additional damage in the medieval era when ironwork and bakery ovens were built inside.

“We inherited a situation that over the centuries has caused this illness,” he said. The mayor has asked the government to petition to make the towers UNESCO world heritage sites. Work to reinforce both towers has been ongoing since the 1990s. Preliminary work on the Garisenda tower will include creating a containment area to prevent any damage to nearby structures or harm to passersby from a “possible collapse,” the city said in a statement. Video cameras will maintain surveillance of the site.

Customer sues Chopt eatery chain over salad that she says contained a piece of manager's finger

MOUNT KISCO, N.Y. (AP)—A customer has filed a lawsuit against the fast casual chain Chopt over a salad that she says contained a piece of the manager’s finger. The lawsuit filed Monday by Allison Cozzi of Greenwich, Connecticut, alleges that she bought a salad at a Chopt location in Mount Kisco, New York, on April 7, 2023, and realized while eating it that “she was chewing on a portion of a human finger that had been mixed in to, and made a part of, the salad.” According to the

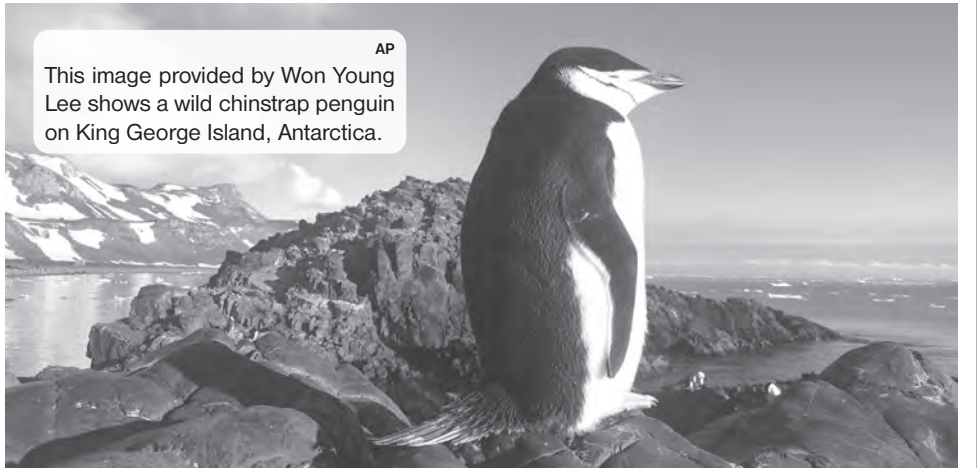
suit, a manager at the restaurant accidentally severed a piece of her left pointer finger while chopping arugula. The manager went to the hospital but the contaminated arugula was served to customers including Cozzi, the lawsuit says. Westchester County health department records show that Chopt was fined \$900. Cozzi said in the lawsuit that she suffered injuries including shock, panic attacks, migraine, cognitive impairment, nausea, dizziness, and neck and shoulder pain as a result of eating the contaminated salad. She is seeking unspecified monetary damages.

Robbery suspect's colorful underwear helped police arrest him, authorities say

NEW YORK (AP) — A pair of multicolored briefs peeking out above a robbery suspect’s low-slung trousers helped police arrest him more than a year later, federal authorities in New York said Wednesday. The robbery happened at a tobacco shop in Queens on Sept. 14, 2022. Three masked men got out of a Mazda and entered the store, according to a complaint filed in federal court last week. Two of the men pointed guns at employees and customers while the third emptied the cash register and grabbed merchandise and employees’ cellphones, the complaint said. The robbers fled in the MazdaSurveillance videos that were disseminated through the media showed the third robber wearing brightly colored briefs with a large letter R in white and the year 1990 in yellow. An anonymous tipster passed along the Instagram handle of the suspect with the colorful underwear, the complaint said. The caller also told police that the robbers had tried to sell their stolen merchandise at another Queens location.

Science & Technology

Penguin parents sleep for just seconds to guard newborns



WASHINGTON (AP)—It’s a challenge for all new parents: Getting enough sleep while keeping a close eye on their newborns. For some penguins, it means thousands of mini-catnaps a day, researchers discovered.

Chinstrap penguins in Antarctica need to guard their eggs and chicks around-the-clock in crowded, noisy colonies. So they nod off thousands of times each day—but only for about four seconds at a time—to stay vigilant, the researchers reported Thursday in the journal *Science*.

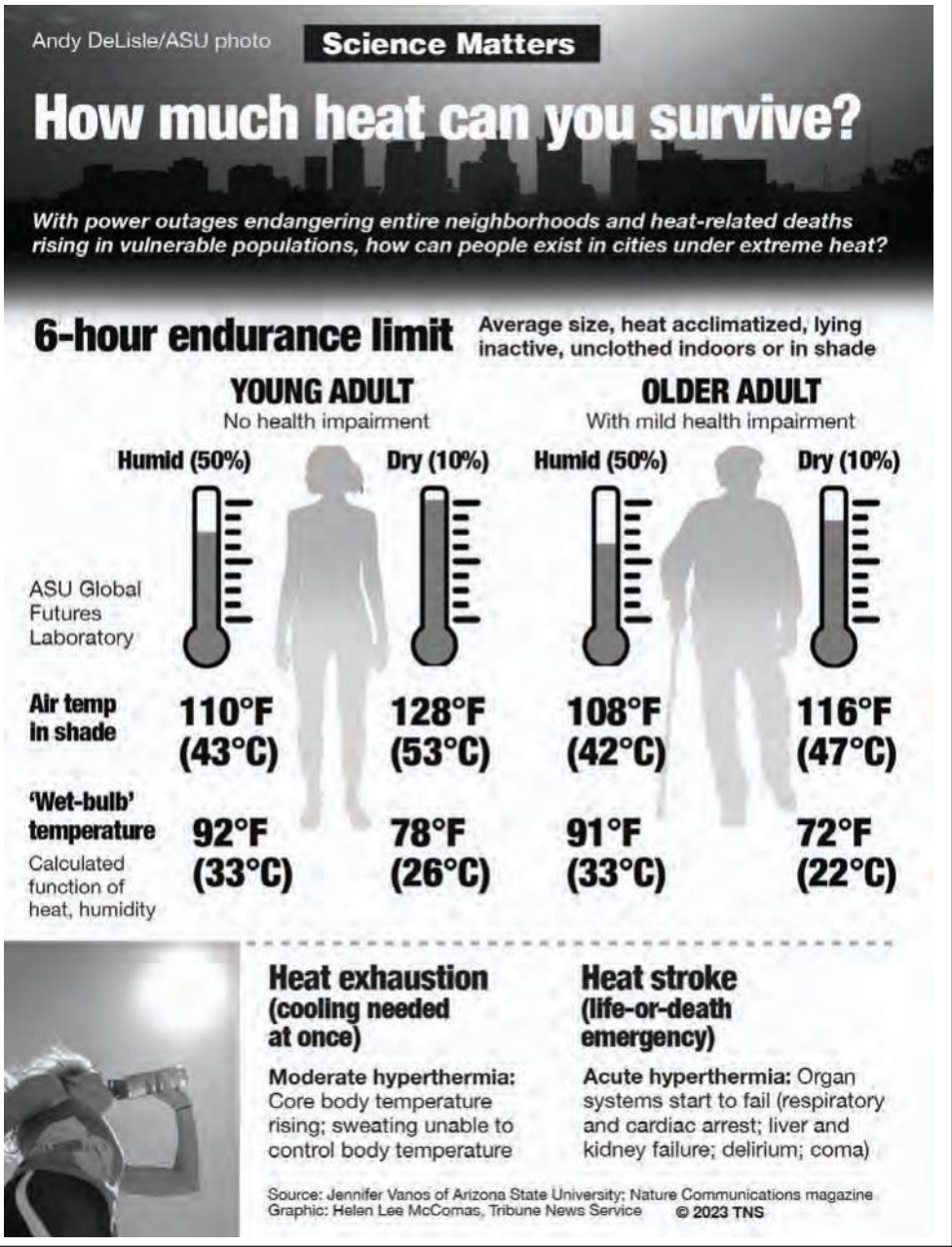
These short “micro-sleeps,” totaling around 11 hours per day, appear to be enough to keep the parents going for weeks.

“These penguins look like drowsy drivers, blinking their eyes open and shut, and they do it 24/7 for several weeks at a time,” said Niels Rattenborg, a sleep researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence in Germany and co-author of the new study.

“What’s surprising is that they’re able to function OK and successfully raise their young,” he said.

Chinstrap penguins, named for the thin line of black facial feathers resembling a chinstrap, usually lay their eggs in pebble nests in November. As with many other kinds of penguins, mated pairs share parenting duties. One parent tends to the eggs and chicks alone while the other goes off fishing for family meals.

While the adults don’t face many natural predators in the breeding season, large birds called brown skuas prey on eggs and small fuzzy gray chicks. Other adults may also try to steal pebbles from nests. So the devoted parents must be always on guard.



Life & Style

Taylor Swift is named Time magazine's person of the year

NEW YORK (AP)—Is the year of Taylor Swift over now? Not yet.

Time magazine named Swift its person of the year on Wednesday, a week after Spotify announced she was the most-played artist on the streaming platform.

Swift was picked from a group of nine finalists that included Barbie, King Charles III, and OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman, among others.

"While her popularity has grown across the decades, this is the year that Swift, 33, achieved a kind of nuclear fusion: shooting art and commerce together to release an energy of historic force," Time said about her selection.

Her year included the wildly popular Eras Tour and concert movie, the release of her reimagined



Taylor Swift performs at the Monumental stadium during her Eras Tour concert in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023. NATACHA PISARENKO

'1989' album, and her closely watched relationship with Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce. She's even the

subject of college courses.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was Time's 2022 person of the year.

Lawsuit accuses Sean Combs, 2 others of raping 17-year-old girl in '03; Combs denies allegations

NEW YORK (AP)—A woman sued the hip-hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs on Wednesday, claiming he and two other men raped her 20 years ago in a New York City recording studio when she was 17.

The woman, whose name wasn't disclosed in the court filing, is the fourth person to file a lawsuit in recent weeks accusing Combs of sexual assault.

In the lawsuit, the woman said she was in 11th grade at a high school in a Detroit suburb in 2003, when she met Harve Pierre, then the president of Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment record label, at a lounge.

She said Pierre flew her to New York on a private jet and took her to a recording studio,

where she was given drugs and alcohol until she was incapable of consenting to sex. Then, the lawsuit said, Pierre, Combs and a man she didn't know took turns raping her.

The lawsuit included photographs of the woman sitting on Combs' lap that she said were taken on the night in question at the Daddy's House Recording Studio.

Combs, 54, denied the allegations.

"For the last couple of weeks, I have sat silently and watched people try to assassinate my character, destroy my reputation and my legacy," Combs said in a statement Wednesday. "Sickening allegations have been made

against me by individuals looking for a quick payday. Let me be absolutely clear: I did not do any of the awful things being alleged. I will fight for my name, my family and for the truth."

A request for comment from Pierre was sent to Bad Boy Entertainment.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in Manhattan follows three others accusing Combs of abuse.

A lawsuit by the singer Cassie containing allegations of beatings and other abuse was settled on Nov. 17, the day after it was filed. Before the settlement, Combs denied the allegations through his lawyer.

FROM SZA TO THE STONE OF SCONE

The words that help tell the story of 2023 were often mispronounced

By JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

Some of the words tied to this year's hottest topics were also among the most mangled when it came to saying them aloud, with stumblers ranging from the first name of "Openheimer" star Cillian Murphy to the singer SZA to the name of a sacred slab of sandstone used in the coronation of King Charles III.

This year's lists of the most mispronounced words in the U.S. and Britain were released Thursday by the online language learning company Bab-

bel, which commissions The Closed Captioning Group in the U.S. and the British Institute of Verbatim Reports in the U.K. to identify the top words that news anchors, politicians and other public figures have struggled with.

Going through the lists provides a bit of a year-end review that ranges from scientific discoveries to entertainment to politics. Babel teacher Malcolm Massey said the diversity of the words struck him, with words coming from several different languages.

"I think a lot of it is due to

how close our cultures have become because of how globalized things are," Massey said.

SZA, who leads in nominations for the upcoming Grammys and whose "Kill Bill" was the second most-streamed song on Spotify this year, made the U.S. list. Her name is pronounced SIZ-uh, according to the experts at Babel, who say the first name of another entertainer on the list, the Irish actor who starred in this summer's hit as physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, is pronounced KI-lee-uhn.

Other pronunciations mak-

ing the U.S. list include:

■ The name of biotech entrepreneur and Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, pronounced Vih-VAKE Rah-mah-SWAH-me.

■ Two volcanos—Mexico's Popocatepetl, pronounced Poh-poh-kah-TEH-peh-til, and Hawaii's Kilauea, pronounced Kee-lou-EY-uh.

■ The late Karl Lagerfeld's cat, Choupette, pronounced SHOO-pet, who garnered headlines as the Met Gala honored the late Chanel designer.

The coronation of King Charles in May helped put the

Stone of Scone, pronounced Stown uhv Skoon, on Britain's list, and get an honorable mention on the U.S. list. The sacred slab on which ancient Scottish kings were crowned was beneath the seat of the Coronation Chair when the crown was placed on Charles' head.

Other pronunciations on the U.K. list include:

■ The word padam, pronounced PAD-dahm, which comes from Kylie Minogue's summertime hit "Padam Padam," which refers to the sound of a heartbeat.

■ Bharat, pronounced BUH-ruht, an ancient Sanskrit word that means India in Hindi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government this

fall has signaled that Indians should shed the name India and instead use its other official name Bharat.

The words listed show the topics people focused on enough over the last year "to really have something to say about it," said Kristie Denlinger, a lecturer in the linguistics department at the University of Texas in Austin. She said being exposed to an unfamiliar word enough can eventually help someone master it.

"Anything that is kind of different from what a speaker is used to, they can learn how to pronounce things in different ways than what they're used to, it just takes more exposure," Denlinger said.

Childhood friend knows truth of man's parentage

DEAR ABBY: Forty years ago, a neighborhood boy fathered a child with a neighborhood girl. "Billy" was 17 at the time, and "Becky" was 14 or 15. Both were friends of mine. They were not a steady couple. She liked him, but I feel he used her. I heard that she married an older gentleman who accepted the baby, "Matt," as his own.

Ten years ago, I found Matt on Facebook. I told him I knew his mother, and he shared her contact information with me. When I called Becky, we enjoyed talking about old times, and I let her know that Billy had passed away. She informed me that her husband had also passed away.

I was surprised when she told me she never told Matt who his biological father was. He was raised believing his biological father was Becky's husband. I have photographs of Billy, and Matt has an aunt he is unaware of. As tempted as I am to inform him who his father was, I know that is not the right thing to do.

We don't communicate regularly, but Becky and I are friends on Facebook. I believe she's having health issues now. Abby, if she passes away, do you think I should let Matt know who his father was, share the photographs and let him know about his aunt? I think I'd want to know.

OLD FRIEND IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR OLD FRIEND: If Becky's health problems

are life-threatening, she's the person you should consider approaching. The question you should pose is this: Would she want her son to think he's all alone in the world after she's gone?

I do not think you should lay this news on Matt after his mother's death. His parents would not be there to answer his inevitable questions, and he would likely feel hurt and angry that he wasn't told the truth.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife is an active member of her church, whereas I am a non-believer. It is, of course, her right to practice her religion and enjoy belonging to a community of like-minded people. The difficulty stems from the many hours spent every week above and beyond the services, such as prayer sessions, Bible study groups, etc.

I have begun to resent her heavy involvement in church administration that has nothing to do with worship, and the resulting lack of spontaneity in our relationship. To plan an activity or vacation, she needs at least two months' notice because of her never-ending, self-imposed commitments. This has increased over the years.

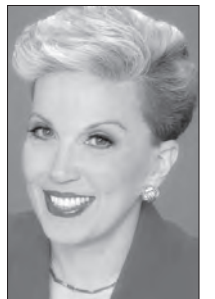
We have a large circle of friends, and our marriage has no other major issues. We try to find a balance, but it's not easy. What advice do you have for us?

FAITHLESS IN FRANCE

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR FAITHLESS: Does your wife realize you are so upset about the imbalance in her relationship to the church and to YOU that you wrote to an advice columnist for help? By all means, tell her. The two of you are overdue for a serious discussion about the way she budgets her time, since you feel cheated. Begin that conversation now and, if necessary, involve a mediator.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Embiid has season-high 50 points in 76ers' victory over Wizards



WASHINGTON (AP)—Joel Embiid scored a season-high 50 points and had 13 rebounds to help the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Washington Wizards 131-126 on Wednesday night.

Embiid reached 50 points for the sixth time in his career. He had a career-best 59 on Nov. 13, 2022, against Utah.

The reigning NBA MVP was 19 of 24 from the field, making a 3-pointer on two attempts, and hit 11 of 13 free throws. He also had seven assists and six turnovers in just over 38 minutes.

Tyrese Maxey added 26 points and also had seven assists, and De'Anthony Melton had 18 points. Kyle Oubre returned after missing 11 games after being struck by a vehicle Nov. 11 in a hit-and-run incident in downtown Philadelphia. He had 12 points in 19 minutes.

Jordan Poole led Washington with 23 points. The Wizards are 3-17.

MAVERICKS 147, JAZZ 97

DALLAS (AP)—Luka Dončić had 40 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists playing only three periods after the first half triple-double of his career in Dallas' victory over Utah.

Dončić had his 60th career triple-double to move past Larry Bird for sole possession of ninth place on the career list. It was the first 25-point first-half triple-double in NBA history.

It was the Mavericks' highest-scoring game this season and two points short of their highest-scoring game ever in



Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, center, gets fouled by Washington Wizards center Daniel Gafford, left, during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, in Washington.

regulation. Dallas' 52-point lead in the closing minutes was one point short of the franchise record set in November 2014 in a 123-70 win over Philadelphia.

Kyrie Irving added 26 points for Dallas. Ochai Agbaji led Utah with 21 points.

GRIZZLIES 116, PISTONS 102

DETROIT (AP)—Desmond Bane scored 32 of his career-high 49 points in the second half and Memphis handed Detroit its 18th straight loss.

Detroit is 2-19, with the losing streak the longest in one season in franchise history and second-longest overall behind a 21-game slide at the end of the 1979-80 season and start of 1980-81.

The streak is the longest in

the NBA since Houston lost 20 straight in 2020-21. The Philadelphia 76ers hold both NBA records, setting the single-season mark at 26 in a row in 2013-14 and the overall mark at 28 at the end of 2015-16 and start of 2016-17.

Bane was 19 of 31 from the field, hitting 4 of 8 3-pointers, and made seven free throws without a miss. He also had eight assists and six rebounds. His previous scoring high was 38 against Brooklyn on Oct. 24, 2022.

TIMBERWOLVES 102, SPURS 94

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Rudy Gobert had 16 points and 21 rebounds and NBA-leading Minnesota held on to beat San Antonio for its fifth straight victory and the

Spurs' 15th loss in a row.

Mike Conley added 18 points, Anthony Edwards had 17 and Naz Reid 15. Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds to help Minnesota improve to 16-4. Edwards returned after missing two games because of a right hip pointer, but went 4 of 17 from the field.

Gobert matched up often with good friend and French countryman Victor Wembanyama in the rookie's first game in Minnesota. Wembanyama struggled against Minnesota's height with Gobert, Towns and Reid, scoring just 12 points on 4-of-13 shooting. He had 10 rebounds.

CLIPPERS 111, NUGGETS 102

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Paul

George scored 25 points and Los Angeles rallied to beat Denver and snap an eight-game skid against the defending NBA champion Nuggets.

Jamal Murray scored 23 points for Denver. Jokic had a triple-double with 22 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists.

It was Denver's first loss to the Clippers since Jan. 11, 2022. The Nuggets fell to 5-8 on the road after blowing a 15-point lead in the opening quarter.

NETS 114, HAWKS 113

ATLANTA (AP)—Mikal Bridges hit the deciding fade-away jumper with 4.5 seconds remaining and scored 32 points in Brooklyn's victory over Atlanta.

There were 43 lead changes and 11 ties, with Bridges hitting the decisive shot to give the

Nets their fifth win in six games. Atlanta has lost four of five.

Trae Young had 30 points for Atlanta.

WARRIORS 110, TRAIL BLAZERS 106

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Stephen Curry overcame a slow start to score 31 points, Jonathan Kuminga dazzled off the bench for 13 points and Golden State rallied to beat Portland.

Kuminga dunked on a pretty alley-oop from Draymond Green with 1:03 left and made all six of his field goals. Kuminga also stole the ball from Toumani Camara with 29 seconds to go and his team ahead 105-104, leading to a 3 by Curry.

Anfernee Simons scored 28 points to lead the Trail Blazers. Shaedon Sharpe added 26 points, six rebounds and five assists, but missed a free throw with 1:18 remaining.

HEAT 112, RAPTORS 103

TORONTO (AP)—Caleb Martin had a season-high 24 points and a career-best 12 rebounds, Duncan Robinson scored 21 points and Miami beat Toronto.

Jimmy Butler scored 19 points, Orlando Robinson had 15 points and 12 rebounds and Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 15 points to help the Heat win for the second time in six games.

Pascal Siakam scored 30 points for Toronto.

ROCKETS 110, THUNDER 101

HOUSTON (AP)—Dillon Brooks scored 23 points and Houston beat Oklahoma City to end a three-game losing streak.

Aaron Holiday scored a season-high 22 points off the bench and matched a career best with six 3-pointers. He also had six rebounds in 27 minutes.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led Oklahoma City with 33 points on 13-of-18 shooting.

BULLS 111, HORNETS 110

CHICAGO (AP)—DeMar DeRozan scored 29 points and Chicago beat short-handed Charlotte for its third straight victory following a five-game skid.

Nikola Vucevic had 20 and 11 rebounds for the Bulls and Coby White added 19 points.

Gordon Hayward scored 27 points for Charlotte, and Terry Rozier had 25.

CAVALIERS 121, MAGIC 111

CLEVELAND (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 35 points, Darius Garland added 26 and Cleveland overcame Paolo Banchero's 42-point night to beat Orlando.

The No. 1 overall pick in the 2020 draft, Banchero went 16 of 26 from the field for Orlando, which lost for just the second time in 11 games.

Pacers turn heads with offense as they leaned on defense to reach the tournament semifinals

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—The Indiana Pacers entertain fans with their sprinter-like tempo and historic scoring pace.

They're heading to Las Vegas because of defense.

After forcing seven turnovers in a game-changing third quarter and 18 overall in Tuesday's 122-112 victory that eliminated title contender Boston from the inaugural NBA In-Season Tournament, All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton took a moment to put the spotlight on something that once seemed unthinkable.

"Our defense was there? Could you tell?" he joked. "We wanted to be in this situation all year and here we are. And it's not just about being here, it's about winning. So we're excited to go to Vegas and play some more defense."

It's not that the league's worst-ranked scoring defense suddenly found a magical solution.

But when the Pacers needed stops, they threw a wrinkle at

Boston in the second half and managed to hold one of the league's top teams scoreless for 86 of the final 117 seconds—long enough for Indiana to break a 105-105 tie with nine straight points.

"We just changed some things schematically on defense there. Jayson (Tatum) was doing a good job of attacking me in the first half, so we did a good job of changing it up a little bit and figuring it out defensively," Haliburton said. "We got a couple of stops and nobody wants to run with us when we're getting stops."

The Pacers played so well, they were serenaded with the chant of "De-fense! De-fense!"—a throwback to coach Rick Carlisle's first stint with the Pacers and throughout ex-coach Frank Vogel's tenure, something few thought would return this season.

It was a 61-point turnaround from an embarrassing 155-104 loss in this season's first matchup with Boston, one that Indi-

ana used as motivation.

"Everybody saw what they did to us in Boston, so it was personal," Bruce Brown said.

Offensively, there's little doubt about the Pacers' potency.

They entered Tuesday leading the league in field goal percentage (51.1%), assists (30.1), points in the paint (59.9), fast-break points (17.7) and scoring (128.1 points)—nearly two points above Denver's NBA single-season record (126.5) from 1981-82.

Even after a slow start on a subpar shooting night, Haliburton capped his first triple-double with the tie-breaking four-point play. He finished with 26 points, 13 assists, 10 rebounds and no turnovers in 40 minutes while battling an illness.

Haliburton has embraced his role as the leader of this young, deep and talented team, and he's wasted no time demonstrating he's a perfect fit for its run-and-gun style.

He's already broken the

franchise's NBA-era single-season mark with four games of 30 or more points and 15 or more assists this season, and his four 15-assist games are just one fewer than the other 29 teams combined.

In November, he also joined Michael Jordan and LeBron James as the only players in league history to average 27.0 points and 10.0 rebounds while shooting 50% from the field and 40% from 3-point range over a full month. Jordan first did it in March 1989; James matched the feat in February 2017.

"It's clear that this evolution is ongoing and it's erupting before our very eyes," Carlisle said, referring to his 23-year-old budding star. "I thought we tried to spell him when we could and he still ended up playing 40 minutes, but that's what happens in play-off games. That's how it goes. He's a spectacular player and I know that (Jayson) Tatum got player of the month, but I'm sure Tyrese was right there."

The bigger question: How long can the Pacers keep playing two-way basketball?

Despite spending most of the offseason talking about improved defense, it didn't show up in the numbers over the first quarter of the season. They're still allowing 125.2 points, perhaps a byproduct of playing so fast.

But after winning the first tournament game, becoming the first group winner and the first semifinalist, they're hoping to leave Vegas as the first champion.

And they want to maintain that winning formula for the rest of the season.

"If we want to get to the playoffs and beat an elite team, obviously that's where we have to hang our hats," two-time blocked shots champ Myles Turner said. "The old saying is offense wins games, defense wins championships. I'm a big believer in that myself so if we keep winning games, we'll figure it out on defense."

Offensive struggles mount for the Patriots, Giants and Jets

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



It's been more than a decade since the NFL featured three offenses as challenged as the ones for the New England Patriots, New York Jets and New York Giants.

Blame it on quarterback injuries, bad rosters, poor coaching and downright bad play, those three teams rank at the bottom of the NFL in scoring.

The Jets rank 30th at 14.3 points per game, followed by the Giants at 13.3 and the Patriots at 12.3 — marking the first time since 2011 that three teams scored fewer than 15 points per game in the first 12 contests.

Coach Bill Belichick's Patriots are easily the worst of the three offenses as the lowest-scoring team through 12 games since the 2011 Rams were at 11.7.

New England has been shut out twice at home for the first time ever after losing 6-0 to the Chargers last week and is the first team since 1938 to lose three straight games while allowing 10 or fewer points in each of them.

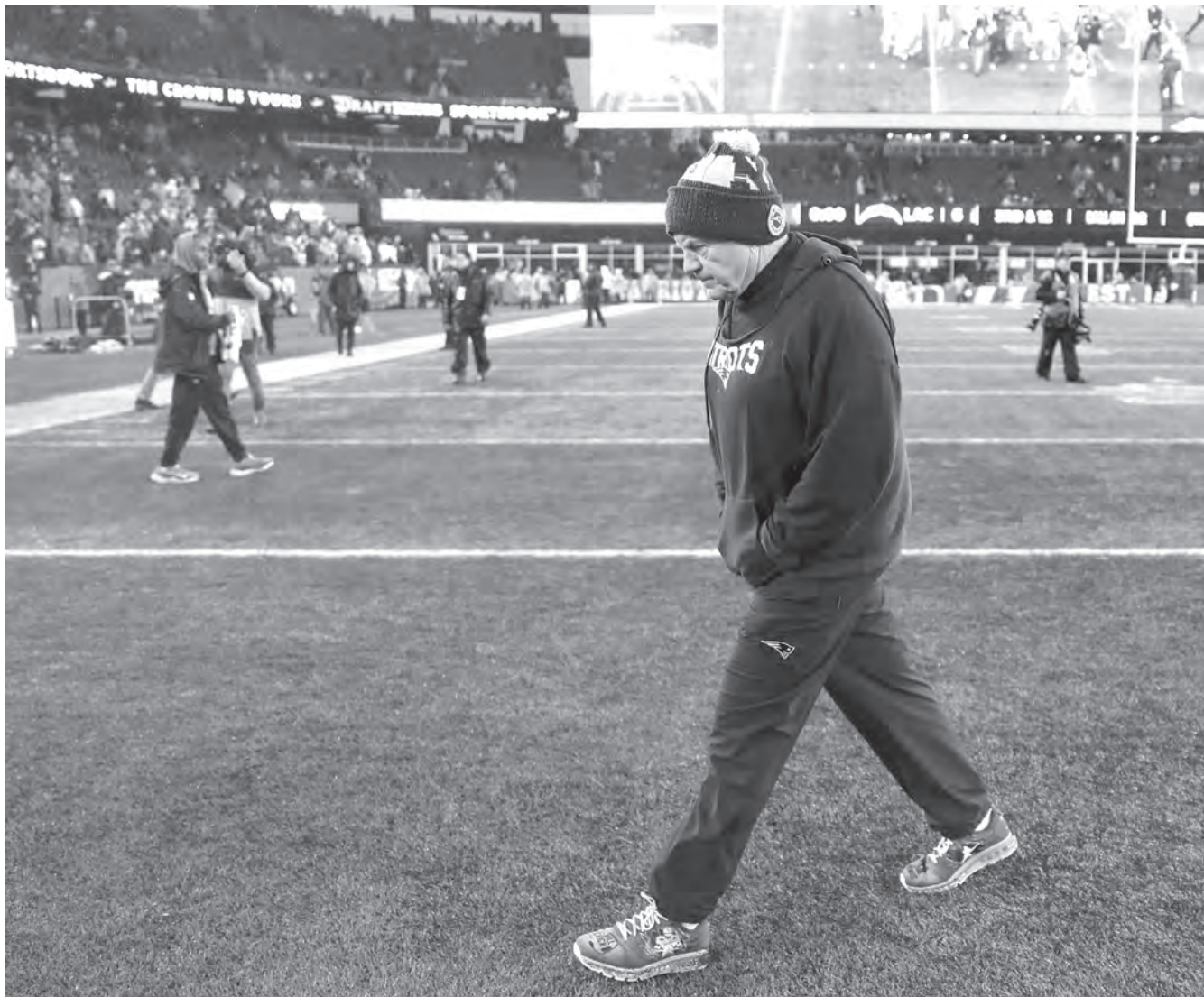
The Patriots had lost 10-6 to the Colts and 10-7 to the Giants in the previous two games. The last team to do that was the Chicago Cardinals, who lost four in a row when allowing 10 or fewer points each game in 1938 when players still wore leather helmets and teams ran the ball more than twice as often as throwing it.

New England will try to break that streak on Thursday night against Pittsburgh in a game projected to have few points scored. With the Steelers set to start Mitch Trubisky at quarterback and the Patriots likely going to Bailey Zappe for a second straight game, the over-under for the game has been set at 30.5 points, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

Sportradar has tracked over-unders for the past 15 seasons and that would be the lowest total in that span, beating the 32.5 for a Saints-Browns game in Week 16 last season and a Browns-Steelers game in Week 14 of the 2009 season. Both those games finished under.

Making matters worse for the Jets and Patriots is the fact their defenses have been playing at a high level for much of the season. The Jets (4-8) are allowing 19.6 points per game—excluding defensive and special teams scores—and the Patriots (2-10) are even better at 18.6.

They are the only two teams since at least 2000 to have losing records after 12 games, while allowing less than 20 points per game to



New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick walks off the field after a 6-0 loss to the Los Angeles Chargers following an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023, in Foxborough, Mass.

opposing offenses.

The Jets have scored only 10 offensive touchdowns, the fewest through 12 games since the 1993 Bengals also had 10.

The issues for the Giants revolve around a poor offensive line and quarterbacks who hold

onto the ball too long. New York has taken 69 sacks so far this season for the second most through 12 games to the 73 taken by the Eagles in 1986.

STEPPING UP

The San Francisco 49ers have

been at their best against the toughest competition.

San Francisco handed Philadelphia its second loss of the season with a 42-19 victory that featured six straight drives for the 49ers that ended in touchdowns.

The Niners now have four wins by at least 23 points against teams that are currently in playoff position, having also beaten Pittsburgh 30-7, Dallas 42-10 and Jacksonville 34-3.

Only two teams in NFL his-

tory have ever had three wins by at least 23 points against teams that made the playoffs with Kansas City doing it in 2021 and Green Bay in 1996.

San Francisco has outscored teams in playoff position by 102 points in six games—including losses to Cleveland and Minnesota. The plus-17 points per game differential against playoff teams would rank third best among the 1,290 teams that have had at least five games against playoff teams, trailing only the 2007 Patriots (+19.7 points per game) and the 2014 Patriots (+18.0).

HOME COOKING

The Cowboys head into Sunday's showdown against Philadelphia on a dominant run at home with their 14 straight wins in Dallas in the regular season and playoffs being the second-longest streak in the last 10 seasons to New England's 21-gamer from 2017-19.

The Cowboys have tied an NFL record by scoring at least 40 points in four straight home games, joining the Bengals (2013), Rams (2000), Chargers (1960-61) and Lions (1952). Dallas has also scored at least 30 points in seven straight home games, tied for the third longest ever.

The recent play from quarterback Dak Prescott is a big reason why. He has 20 TD passes and only two interceptions in his last six games. Prescott threw 16 TD passes in November, the 11th time a QB has thrown for that many TDs in a single month.

Patrick Mahomes headlines list of nominees for Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Two-time league MVP Patrick Mahomes headlines the list of 32 players chosen as finalists for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award.

Each of the teams nominated one player for the prestigious honor named for the late Payton, a Hall of Fame running back for the Bears. The award recognizes a player for community service and excellence on the field. It has been given annually since 1970 and will be presented at "NFL Honors," the TV show on Feb. 8, during which The Associated Press reveals its individual seasonal award winners.

Mahomes will try to join the award's namesake, Payton, and nine other players who have won both the NFL MVP and the NFL Man of the Year Award. The others who have pulled off that double are: Kurt Warner, LaDainian Tomlinson, Peyton Manning, Dan Marino, Boomer Esiason, John Elway, Joe Theismann, Ken Anderson and Johnny Unitas.

All 32 nominees will receive

a donation of up to \$55,000 in their name to their charity of choice. The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award will receive a \$250,000 donation to the charity of his choice. All donations are courtesy of the NFL Foundation and Nationwide. Along with the other 31 nominees, Mahomes will wear a Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year helmet decal through the end of the season in recognition of his accomplishments on and off the field.

Mahomes was nominated for his work with his foundation, 15 and the Mahomies Foundation, which has placed an emphasis on improving the lives of children with a continued focus on supporting health, wellness, and various communities in need of resources. To date, more than \$4 million in grants and programs have been distributed by the foundation.

In addition, Mahomes has donated \$1.625 million as well \$1,500 for every touchdown in the regular season to Boys and Girls Clubs of America in addition to his \$1.625 million donation. He has also partnered with

Make-A-Wish to grant wishes of 10 children who have life-threatening illnesses.

"As a dad of two, it means the world to me to be able to provide opportunities and support to underserved youth, and my family and I are so humbled to be in the running for an award that means so much to the Chiefs organization and to our community," Mahomes said in a statement. "It's crazy to see the way 15 and the Mahomies has grown and continues to make more and more of a difference for kids here in Kansas City, across Texas and beyond."

Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott won the award last season. Among the other active players who have previously won the award are Denver's Russell Wilson and Atlanta's Calais Campbell.

The nominees:

■ Jonathan Ledbetter, Cardinals
■ Bradley Pinion, Falcons
■ Roquan Smith, Ravens
■ Dion Dawkins, Bills
■ Bradley Boze-man, Panthers

■ Justin Jones, Bears
■ Ted Karras, Bengals
■ Anthony Walker Jr., Browns
■ DeMarcus Lawrence, Cowboys
■ Garrett Bolles, Broncos
■ Frank Ragnow, Lions
■ De'Vondre Campbell, Packers
■ Jon Weeks, Texans
■ Zaire Franklin, Colts
■ Dawuane Smoot, Jaguars
■ Patrick Mahomes, Chiefs
■ Maxx Crosby, Raiders
■ Derwin James Jr., Chargers
■ Cooper Kupp, Rams
■ Alec Ingold, Dolphins
■ Harrison Phillips, Vikings
■ Jonathan Jones, Patriots
■ Tyrann Mathieu, Saints
■ Saquon Barkley, Giants
■ Solomon Thomas, Jets
■ Lane Johnson, Eagles
■ Cameron Heyward, Steelers
■ Arik Armstead, 49ers
■ Bobby Wagner, Seahawks
■ Antoine Winfield Jr., Buccaneers
■ Jeffery Simmons, Titans
■ Terry McLaurin, Commanders

JAKE THE GREAT

Cincinnati's Jake Browning made the five-year wait between wins as a starting QB worthwhile.

Filling in for the injured Joe Burrow, Browning delivered an impressive performance, going 32 for 37 for 354 yards with one TD pass and one TD run in a 34-31 overtime win over Jacksonville in his second career NFL start. Browning's last win as a starter came in the 2018 Pac-12 title game for Washington against Utah.

Browning joined Vinny Testaverde (1992 vs. Green Bay) as the only players ever to throw for at least 350 yards, complete at least 85% of his passes and have a TD run and pass in the same game.

Browning also had the 11th game ever with at least 35 attempts and an 85% or better completion percentage with Drew Brees the only player to do it twice. The others who did it once each were Rich Gannon, Peyton Manning, Tom Brady, Dak Prescott, Russell Wilson, Lamar Jackson, Patrick Mahomes and Justin Herbert.

Marianas Variety is NMC Golf Open's first Platinum Sponsor



As part of its long-standing commitment to higher education in the CNMI, *Marianas Variety News and Views* recently donated \$10,000 in advertising to the Northern Marianas College Foundation for the upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024.

"*Marianas Variety* remains a steadfast advocate for the NMC Foundation and its unwavering commitment to advancing higher education in the CNMI," said Amier Younis, publisher of *Marianas Variety*. "We take pride in renewing our support for their forthcoming Golf Open, extending our best wishes to all participating play-



Marianas Variety recently donated \$10,000 worth of print and online advertisements to the Northern Marianas College Foundation to help promote its upcoming Golf Open in March 2024.

ers for a successful and enjoyable event."

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and the tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is \$250.

"*Marianas Variety's* steadfast commitment to promoting our golf tournaments through their generous advertising support has been instrumental in creating a buzz and fostering

community engagement," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation. "We are greatly appreciative of their contribution."

The tournament, which is

also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for

the residents of the CNMI.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the College with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.instagram.com/nmc.proa)) or visit www.marianas.edu. (NMC)

THANK

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gratitude to the Team Marianas sponsors for providing the financial support for the direct charter flight, uniforms, and other stuff for all of us. It truly saved us, athletes, from having to spend more and go through the difficulties of finding sufficient travel options on our own," said Tudela, who debuted in the Pacific Games and topped the model physique category.

The cost per passenger for the charter flight (round-trip) was \$1,600—way below the regular fare via commercial flight, which is between \$3,000 and \$4,000. The charter flight, one-way, was just a little over four hours, while it would have taken NMI delegates more than 50 hours to travel via commercial with multiple layovers.

Tudela and company arrived in Solomon several days before the opening ceremonies, giving the team enough time to rest and prepare for their respec-

tive competitions. They then returned to Saipan last Sunday, bringing home five gold medals—the most by the NMI in the history of its participation in the Pacific Games—plus one silver and seven bronzes.

"I want to thank everyone in general who believed in us and had faith in us and our capacity to perform and represent our islands in this high-level competition. That was the most crucial thing because despite us facing many challenges over there—that faith they put in us is what kept us going and motivating us to deliver. I hope we made you all proud. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase yan Ghilissou*," added Tudela, who personally thanked bodybuilding president Dee Clayton for her unwavering support and Latte Built for providing bodybuilders a facility to train in.

Golfer Franco Santos acknowledged Team Marianas' sponsors for playing a critical role in their participation to the Pacific Games.

"We could not have per-

formed the way we did without our sponsors, support from our families and friends here on the island, and ones from afar. The experience that we had was one to remember and will take that to Tahiti to bring home more medals. On behalf of Team Marianas, we greatly appreciate all the support from our community," Santos said.

Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation president Justin Andrew, who joined the NMI National Va'a Team in the Solomons and served as co-manager with Joseph Weaver, also shared their appreciation to Team Marianas' sponsors and support staff.

"Glad to be home and thank you to Team Marianas sponsors, the NMSA Board, and all support staff for getting us to Solomon Islands and back. Thank you, chef de mission Nick Gross for ensuring the smooth operations on the grounds, and thank you and congratulations to all our athletes/ ambassadors for a job

well done," Andrew said.

NMSA president Jerry Tan, meanwhile, noted the impact of the support of private organizations to Team Marianas' success in the Pacific Games.

"Through these organizations and companies' financial assistance in securing a charter flight for Team Marianas, we were able to bring a big delegation to the 2023 Pacific Games and in return our team were motivated and represented the NMI well in Honiara," Tan said.

"We are deeply grateful to the companies that provided assistance to the Team Marianas. They will inspire us to continuously sought more support from the government, the private sector, and other stakeholders, for the overall development of NMI sports, and to use sports as a platform to encourage our community to live a healthy lifestyle and help our athletes and officials reach milestones," the NMSA president added. (PR)

RUNNING

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Marathon, both acknowledged the friends who tagged along during their training runs on Saipan as instrumental in making their latest accomplishment possible.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jean Bernardo and Roxanne Soriano's sisters greeted them with smiles, warm hugs, and a banner at the finish line of the 2023 New York City Marathon.

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25-29 (4:49:29), respectively.

Arvin Velasco was first in the men's 30-34 with a time of 3:19:44, followed by fellow Saipan riders Aladin Deocareza Jr. in 4:15:56 and Paolo Pepito in 4:30:59.

In the men's 35-39, Guam's Rommel Solis topped his age group after clocking in at 3:37:17. He was followed by two Koreans—Hyosuk Gong (3:43:13) and Jesung Yeon (4:16:58).

Saipan's Fred Remilioza topped the men's 40-44 after crossing the finish line at the former Mariana Resort & Spa in 4:14:32. Runners-up were Saipan's Travis Spaeth in 5:15:15 and Korea's Jin Kang in 5:36:28.

In the men's 44-49 age group, Saipan's Nap Dizon came first after checking in with a time of

4:01:36. Korea's Sungmin Kim came second in 4:06:57 with Saipan's Hernando Cristobal third in 4:24:17.

Saipan's Joel Buco topped the men's 50-54 division with a time of 3:43:53 with Sean Ra of Korea and Bob Ferrer of Saipan coming second and third at 4:07:30 and 4:23:11, respectively.

Korea came in first and second in the men's 55-59 with Tae Sung Moon and Young Nam Lee submitting times of 4:10:49 and 4:32:52, respectively. Saipan's Noel Altamirano was third in 4:59:02.

Jung Kab San of Korea, Nario Jacosalem of Tinian, and Pax Gueverra of Saipan finished 1-2-3 in the over 60 division with times of 4:06:54, 4:30:50, and 4:33:37, respectively.

J.C. Ferrer said her experience in the HOM wasn't easy, as she only saw the map four days after registering.



MARK RABAGO

Renren Gaviola topped the men's 20-24 age group of the 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle.

"I actually regretted entering the race. I had thought that the course was the same as the years before but this race was by far the hardest. In my age group there wasn't any girls aside from me. So, it was more of a challenge for myself, I



MARK RABAGO

Jillian Christi "J.C." Ferrer topped the women's under 19 age group of the 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle.

did not have a lot of practice coming on to the race, so my biggest enemy was myself," she said.

Although she did win her age group, Ferrer said she wasn't entirely content with her time.

"I did have to remind myself that the course and the conditions were different. It was by far the most tiring and the most exhausting race I've ever experienced. When I reached the 50K mark I was already cramping going up half of the course. I was struggling trying to keep my mind straight and finish the race. I kept telling myself over and over again that if I finished the race I can finally rest, but I knew once it was done it would've been the easiest part," she added.

Gaviola said the start of the HOM was great as the weather was still sunny, but when they reached Marpi the skies began to open up and the pouring rain made the road wet and slippery.

The 23-year-old said he enjoyed his first HOM and will come back stronger in 2024.

Velasco, meanwhile, admitted that his second HOM

almost broke him as he suffered from cramps going to Route 36.

"The hardest part for me was when I had cramps going to Route 36. I was dropped by my group and had to do a solo effort to the finish line," said the 30-year-old nurse at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp, who dedicated his age group win to his wife and son Ann and Aiden.

The 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle was sponsored by Seman Law Offices LLC, Tan Holdings and Tan Siu Lin Foundation, IP&E, TurnKey Solutions, Triple J Group of Companies, Pacific Trading Co., Hyatt Regency Saipan, The Bike Shop Saipan, Marpac Inc., and Herman's Modern Bakery. It was organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation with help from the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Hell of the Marianas lives up to reputation



The Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle last Saturday attracted 175 registered cyclists, with professional racers from Japan and Korea taking top honors. Participating countries and territories were South Korea, Japan, Russia, Guam, USA, and The Marianas.

The race, jointly organized the MVA and Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation, attracted cyclists from around the world to take on the island's challenging terrain.

In the Professional Division, Ryohei Fujita and Rinichiro Shigeta of SunBrave Professional Cycling Team in Japan crossed the finish line first and in unison in 3:17:35. They were followed by Ryan Matienzo of Guam (3:19:00) and Peter Lombard of Guam (3:21:54). Topping the Women's Division on the long course were a trio from Korea: Miso Kim (3:44:21), Jiseon Jang (4:06:14), and Jo Ara (4:06:26).

Among the non-pros, topping the Men's Division were Romel Solis of Guam (3:37:17), Hyosuk Gong of Korea (3:43:14), and Joel Buco of The Marianas (3:43:53). For the women, it was Eunji Bong of Korea (4:16:57), Charlotte Dixon of Korea (5:09:38), and Jillian Christi Ferrer of The Marianas (5:19:06).

In the short course of 50K, The Marianas took all the top slots, with Dennis Bautista (1:41:07), Cesar Fortaleza



Cyclists start the Hell of The Marianas 2023 in Saipan, The Marianas, on Dec. 2, 2023. The race—featuring 100K and 50K courses—challenged riders to 4,900 feet of ascends and declines across the island.

MVA

(1:32:48), and Nelson Pagaduan (1:42:53) finishing first for the men, and JayAnne Felipe (1:46:18), Shawna Brennflect (1:49:29), and Marjorie Ganacias (1:56:23) leading the women.

"Overall, feedback from the riders was very positive for Hell of The Marianas, and so we count the event as a success," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Hats off to all

the phenomenal riders who had the fortitude to finish this challenging course. And a big thank to our community for making our riders feel welcomed—to drivers who helped keep riders safe on the roads by driving carefully, to the students and others those who came out and cheered for the participants, and to all our other supporters. We look forward to welcoming all the riders back—and more—in

2024 for another unforgettable race."

Started in 2007, Hell of the Marianas winds its way through Saipan's hills, valleys, and scenic byways. Participants navigated a grueling 4,900 feet of ascents, including steep climbs



MVA

Cyclists take on the challenge of Hell of The Marianas 2023 in Saipan, The Marianas, on Dec. 2, 2023.

and fast descents, making it a true test of endurance and skill. The race has become an important part of Saipan's sporting and cultural scene and has helped raise awareness of the island's unique natural beauty and cultural heritage.

"Restarting the HOM after a long COVID hiatus, we are so pleased that MVA worked to ensure the event could continue," said NMI Cycling Federation president Vince Seaman. "Seeing all the positive feedback from the off-island participants, we are excited and looking forward to continuing this great event in the years to come."

Hell of The Marianas was sponsored by Tan Holdings Corp., Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Seman Law Offices, IP&E, Turnkey Solutions, Triple J, Pacific Trading Co., Hyatt Regency Saipan, Bike Shop Saipan, Marpac, and Herman's Modern Bakery. The event was also supported by the Dept. of Public Safety, Div. of Parks & Recreation, Dept. of Public Works, Senate President Edith Deleon Guerrero, Vice Speaker Joel Camacho, LJ Lawn Care, Saipan Lions Club, and numerous other volunteers.

Hell of The Marianas is traditionally held on the first Saturday of December. (MVA)

Simbulan shines despite late start in tennis

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR



Edwin Simbulan's win in the men's 40 singles in last month's 12th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic was just another step on the 48-year-old's continuing love affair with tennis.

In his first match, the civil engineer had to scrap and claw his



Simbulan

way after going down early and often against Marlon Bercilla.

Bercilla took the first set 3-0, but Simbulan rallied to tie the score at 3-3. After missing crucial moments in the contest, Simbulan ultimately lost the set 6-3.

The second set was tense and full of back and forth, which gave Bercilla severe cramps during the set-deciding tie break. Bercilla ultimately retired from the match, 3-6, 7-6 (2), to hand the win to Simbulan.

Simbulan went on to sweep the three-player division with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Jacky Chen, which was pretty much clinical and straightforward.

Aside from triumphing in the 12th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic, Simbulan also was a finalist in the same tourney's men's 3.0 in 2016 and men's 4.0 in 2017.

Known as "Rafa" by most junior and adult players, Simbulan is a regular recreational player on the island and is regarded as a charismatic individual on the court.

He started learning tennis in 2012 after watching the legendary Rafael Nadal of Spain compete in the Australian Open finals.

Simbulan, who has lived on Saipan since 2006, said his start in tennis was pretty much because of happenstance.

"I got tired or bored just running along Beach Road and decided to pick up a racket in 2012 only to find out later that we are using short or junior rackets. I then started practicing with my wife."

After a while, Simbulan became a regular at the public courts at the American Memorial Park and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Helped by our tennis community mostly Filipinos, I practiced essentially with everyone, adults and juniors alike. I played with our national team players in their earlier years and even got a chance to hit or practice with Carol Lee and Colin Ramsey," he said.

Son sashays to November CWGA tourney win

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR



Hyun "Sunny" Son won the CNMI Women's Golf Association monthly tournament last Nov. 18 at the LaoLao Golf & Resort east course.

It's the third monthly championship of the year in the CWGA tour for the 55-year-old owner of Boss Karaoke following victories in September and July.

Son fired a net 73 to win the tourney following a 41 in the front nine and a 40 in the back nine for a gross of 81 for the 8-handicapper.

October winner Lydia Tan was two strokes back with a 75 net built around a gross of 94 (44-50), while third place went to Kim Sae Hee with her net 78 (gross 86, 43-43).

Son said she's happy to have won her third CWGA tournament and shares her success to her fellow members of the only women's golf club on Saipan.

"The course was good, but the weather wasn't very good. My driving and putter were good during the tournament.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Women's Golf Association members pose for a group photo after their November monthly tournament last Nov. 18 at the LaoLao Golf & Resort east course.



We always finish the tournament and share the joy of winning with the group members. Thank you for my health and happiness with my friends this Thanksgiving," she said.

A total of 10 CWGA members took a swing on the November tourney and the rest are the following with their net scores in parenthesis: Nirimai Koebel (81); Yuko Togawa (82), Flor Jones (82); Lorraine

Babauta (84); Rose Rohringer (85); Dol Yamagishi (87); and Terry Guerrero (98).

The club continues to look for new members as the new season continues. For those interested in becoming a member of CWGA or for more information, contact CWGA president Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, vice president Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621, or treasurer Lou Kim at 783-7317.



Embiiid has
season-high 50
points in 76ers'
victory over
Wizards.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Running sisters complete NYC Marathon

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

Two down, four more to go.

Jean Bernardo and Roxanne Soriano are a third of the way to running the six major marathons of the world after completing the New York City Marathon last Nov. 5.

Last year, the duo—along with Malou Carlos—ran the Chicago Marathon. The other six major marathons in their bucket list are the Tokyo Marathon, Boston Marathon, London Marathon, and Berlin Marathon.

Bernardo, who finished the 42-kilometer run in 6:05:26, said she felt proud of besting her Chicago Marathon time by 23 minutes, which was a feat considering that the NYC Marathon had more uphill runs than the mostly flat Chicago Marathon.

"I'm grateful to Roxanne for doing a great job at pacing us. She didn't leave me. I am also grateful to my sister, Ate Joyce, and Ate Claudette (Soriano's sister). It is heartwarming to see a family member cheering for you at Mile 16 and waiting for us at the finish line with their banners," she said.

To celebrate, Bernardo, Soriano, and their sisters went out for dinner and the next few days toured the city in what runners call a "penguin walk" after the marathon.

She said the hardest part of the NYC Marathon—like any runs—are the uphill parts, specifically the five bridges they had to cross. Running down the five bridges, conversely, was the most



Jean Bernardo, right, and Roxanne Soriano completed their second major marathon after finishing the 2023 New York City Marathon last Nov. 5.

delightful part, Bernardo said, "I love the cheers we received."

She then dedicated her completing the New York City Marathon to people who truly believed her and to others who also want to run a marathon.

"It is not really how fast you can finish the race, but how you started it and cross the finish line with a fulfilled heart," said Bernardo.

As for what's next, Bernardo said she told Soriano that she will be doing half marathons after this.

"But who knows we might join London, Berlin, Boston, or Tokyo next—the last six stars of the Abbott World Major Marathons."

Soriano, for her part, said finishing their second major marathon was quite surreal.

"I was in disbelief that we were able to pull through. One of the best finish lines I have experienced because we saw our families waiting for us at the finish line."

Soriano crossed the finish line slight-

ly ahead of Bernardo at 6:03:16, which was 22 minutes faster than her time in the Chicago Marathon.

Like her running-mate, Soriano said The Big Apple's bridges gave her the

toughest time during the route.

"The Queensboro Bridge was a challenge because it was so quiet with no crowds and the high elevation. The Chicago Marathon has less uphill climbs and bridges unlike the NYC Marathon. New York has five bridges and has higher elevation. The Chicago Marathon elevation is 243 feet compared to the NYC Marathon's elevation of 810 feet," she said.

She said the most pleasant part of the 21-mile run, meanwhile, was the encouragement they got from the people of New York.

"From the moment that we started until the end we were never alone. The crowds of the NYC Marathon and the Chicago Marathon were almost the same...Temperature-wise, it was colder and windy in Chicago...In totality I can say, Jean and I were more prepared for the NYC Marathon than with the Chicago Marathon," said Soriano, who dedicated the New York Marathon to her Kanoa FC teammates and to those who say they can't run a marathon.

To prepare for the New York City Marathon, Bernardo and Soriano trained for five months with 3-4 short runs and one long run totaling 20 miles per week.

Aside from doing another marathon, Soriano's next goal is to complete one in under six hours.

While Bernardo and Soriano were the one who ran the New York City

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Thank you, Team Marianas sponsors

Team Marianas is back home and is deeply grateful to the organizations and companies that made the participation of more than 100 NMI athletes and officials to the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, the Solomon Islands, possible.



The Joeten Daidai Foundation, Triple J, Crowne Plaza Resort, IT&E, IP&E, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Mobil, Tan Holdings, and McDonald's of Guam & Saipan answered Team Marianas and the Northern Marianas Sports Association's call for help, donating

significant amount to cover significant portion of the costs of the charter flight to the Solomon Islands and back.

Christina Tudela, who brought home a gold medal from the bodybuilding competition, was among the NMI delegates that expressed their appreciation to the Team Marianas sponsors.

"I would like to extend my heartfelt

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Marianas athletes and officials are joined in the photo by representatives of various organizations and private companies that supported the group's participation to the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, the Solomon Islands. The delegation is back on island and is deeply grateful to Team Marianas' sponsors.

52 non-pros complete 100K course

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR



A total of 52 non-pro riders completed the challenge of the 100-kilometer course of the 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle last Saturday.

The winners of the age group were a mix of local, Koreans, and a Guam rider that gave pro/elite participants a run for their money.

The age division winners in the long course included Saipan's Jillian Christi "J.C." Ferrer (5:19:06) who was the lone participant in the women's under 19.

There was also one rider in the women's 25-29 with Song Ha from Korea taking the cake in a time of 6:16:14.

In the women's 30-34, the podium finishers were Eunji Bong (4:16:5), Charlotte Dixon (5:09:38), and Jian Shian (5:36:38)—all from Korea.

Seonghee Park of Korea and Kerry Bauer of Saipan finished 1-2 in the women's 35-39 with times of 5:20:34 and 5:43:58, respectively.

The men's age group winners



MARK RABAGO

Men's 30-34 long course winner Arvin Velasco is flanked by runner-up Aladin Deocareza Jr., left, and third place Paolo Pepito during the 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle at the Hyatt Regency Saipan last Saturday.

were Saipan's Renren Gaviola and Japan's Yuya Nishikawa in the men's 20-24 (4:19:25) and men's

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